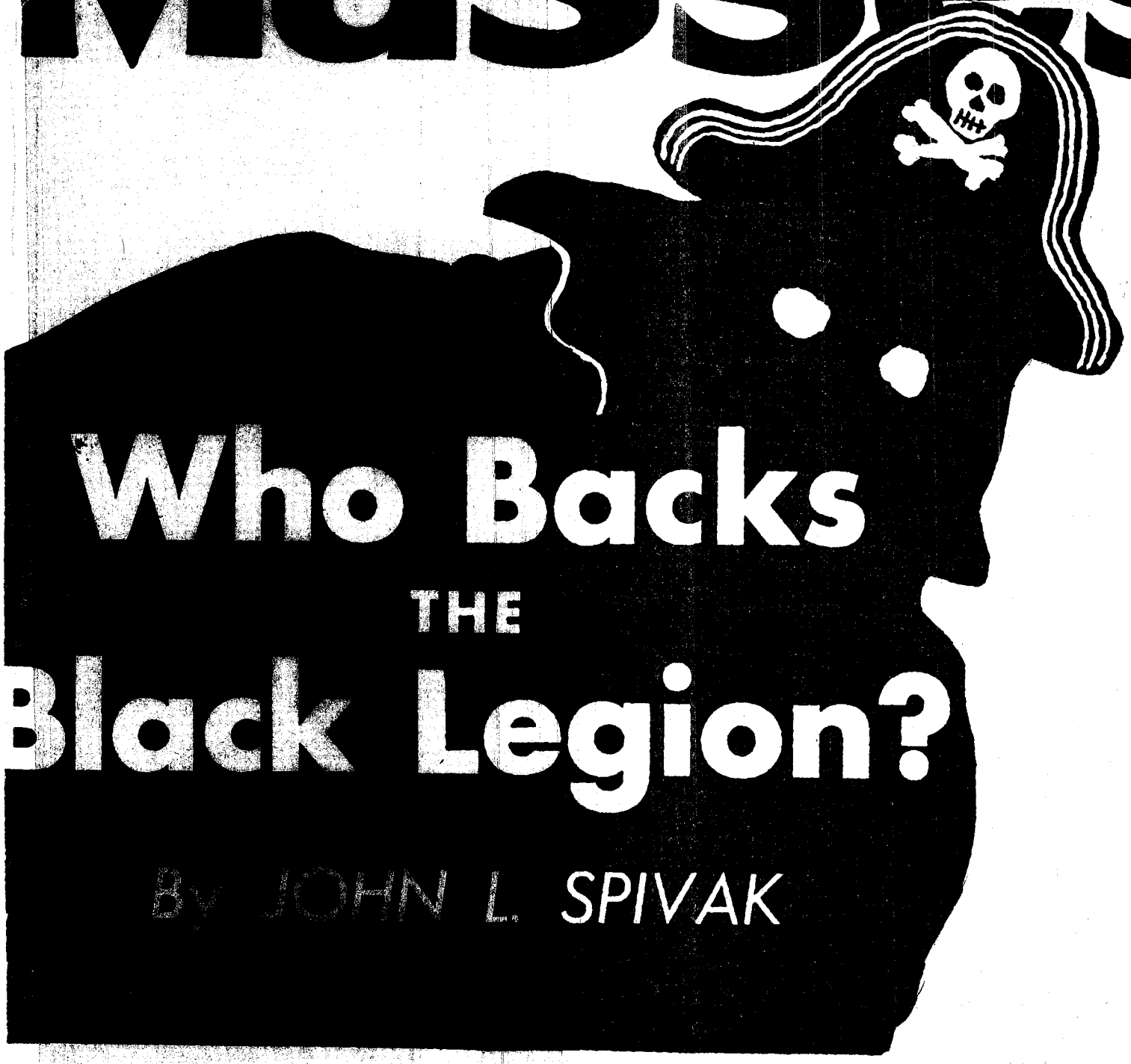
"Affair" — JOSHUA KUNITZ

JUNE 2, 1936 15c

New Masses



Who Backs THE Black Legion?

By JOHN L. SPIVAK

The Socialists Hesitate—*by Joseph Freeman*

Spain's Enemies—*by Ilya Ehrenbourg*

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New Masses

JUNE 9, 1936

The Law Says, "Starve"

THROUGH the Black Legion the reaction carries on an extra-legal war against American people. Through the Supreme Court it carries on a legal war, equally relentless, equally disastrous. First the five old tyrants who constitute the tory majority ruled the N.R.A. and the Guffey Act unconstitutional. They said Congress had violated the rights of the States by attempting to regulate hours and wages for business not in interstate commerce. This week they ruled the New York minimum-wage law unconstitutional. Now they argue that the States also have no right to regulate hours and wages within their own borders.

The position of fascist-minded Big Business, speaking through the Supreme Court, is now abundantly clear. In the name of States' rights, Congress is forbidden to enact social legislation. In the name of individual rights, the States are forbidden to enact social legislation. There is to be no social legislation of any kind, say the supreme autocrats of the United States.

Against this persistent assault upon the American people President Roosevelt opposes mere phrases which grow more and more feeble with each reactionary decision. He disposed of the N.R.A. decision by calling it the product of the horse and buggy age; he found the Guffey decision "educational." Roosevelt will not defend the people against the Supreme Court, and Vandenberg, speaking this week for the Republican "rational liberal" reactionaries, wants to strengthen the power of the Court. Only united action by farmers, workers and middle-class groups organized in a Farmer-Labor Party can curb the power of a body whose usurped power is used to crush every piece of legislation designed in the least to benefit the people.

Making History

YOU may light bonfires on the hills and dance in the streets—it's happened. We refer, of course, to the formal coming of age of the American Newspaper Guild by its decision to affiliate with the American Federation of Labor. The third annual convention of the Guild, which closed its sessions at the Hotel Astor in New York early this week, voted 84 to 5 to join with the main stream of the American labor movement. Such opposition as made itself manifest did not dissent from the principle of joining with bricklayers, plumbers and auto workers. On the contrary, the fears of the small opposition—two Guilds, St. Louis, Mo., and Lansing, Mich.—arose out of a suspicion of the present craft set-up of the Federation.

"We're making history," some of the delegates cried amidst the demonstration that followed announcement of the results of the roll-call vote. They are. News of the affiliation move will undoubtedly seep into company towns where human beings are virtually the feudal serfs of the barons of steel and coal and rubber and autos.

To labor throughout the country the historic Guild decision will bring a new ally and a new courage. Possibly as important is the lesson brought home to the middle class, the white collariat, of our country. By linking its fortunes with those of the industrial workers, the Guild has underscored what has been—and is—a basic thesis with THE NEW MASSES: that the salvation of the middle-class people of the country against reaction lies in the direction of an alliance with the labor movement.

HELL-BENT FOR ELECTION — *Russell T. Limbach*

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Tax Muddle

THE tax muddle in the Senate has not been cleared up, although the administration is striving for an early adjournment. The reactionaries in both old parties, encouraged by Roosevelt's weak stand on his own bill, have thrown the principle of taxing undivided corporate income out of the window, and have substituted measures which will strike at the income tax payers.

In a fundamental sense, the tax bill illuminates the main issues of the presidential campaign. It revolves around the question as to who will pay for the enormous and growing costs of the crisis. On the one hand, we have the Republicans and the reactionary Democrats fighting even the slightest gesture made by the administration toward making the rich pay some small share of depression costs. The so-called liberal Senator Arthur Vandenberg in a radio address made a point of denouncing "the pending presidential tax demands as the greatest legislative atrocity I have ever encountered." This is the tone taken by the reactionaries who deliberately falsify the issue by saying that the tax bill would "prevent all rainy-day surplus." At the same time they attack it on the ground that the tax bill is class legislation designed to soak the rich—thus admitting the real reason for their opposition.

We have pointed out in previous issues that the tax bill was but a hesitating step in the direction of making the corporations disgorge their huge surpluses. Despite the timid character of the proposal, it is being attacked because the reactionaries are afraid that the American people would then demand that real steps be taken to soak the rich.

In the face of the tremendous fire from the press of both parties, Roosevelt has done nothing to meet the attack. He is thus responsible for the reactionaries submitting their own proposals to the Senate which will hit directly at the small taxpayer and will favor the big corporation at the expense of the small one.

The First Step

THE strike of rank-and-file seamen in New York City has ended. Officials of the International Seamen's Union have made much of what they call the seamen's "retreat." But in the eight weeks during which the rank and file fought shipowners, the government and the reactionary union officials, the strikers won clear gains.

Actually, the "outlaw" strike was the first rank-and-file action among maritime unions on the East Coast. It precipitated the showdown in the West which brought a complete victory to militant unionism, the endorsement and strengthening of rank-and-file control. In the East, the attempt of the I.S.U. officialdom to prevent the strikers from using the name of the union was defeated in the courts. "Safety at sea"—the issue originally intended by shipowners and the Department of Commerce to be used against the strikers—proved a boomerang: the workers exposed the inadequacy of safety measures on ships by showing that shipowners saved money and augmented profits by refusing to supply adequate safety devices. Through the strike, overtime pay was won from several companies; other companies holding out for open shop were forced to settle with the union.

Seamen learned that such "liberals" as LaGuardia would send riot squads to beat and gas pickets. They came to understand that one function of government agencies is strikebreaking. They realized the extent and meaning of bureaucracy within their own union.

The rank and file returns to work resolved to build the union and to fortify the militant, rank-and-file group within the union. The objective is clear—better working conditions, better living conditions, better wages, the formation of a national Maritime Federation. The strike was only the first step in a series of struggles. The strike is over—and it has also only just begun.

Hitler's Jitters

CLAUDE COCKBURN'S brilliant news-letter, The Week, published in London, gives one reason why Germany delays answering the British questionnaire on war and peace. No German official can make any serious decision without Hitler's approval, and at this moment der Fuehrer is having one of his frequent attacks of jitters. This particular fit has been going on ever since the morning after the invasion of the Rhineland zone. Hitler cries a great deal, cannot sleep, rants part of the time and for the rest will speak to no one. When he rants, he rants about the Bolsheviks, repeating all the mad fantasies on this subject which he has been saying for years. On at least two occasions, Sir Eric Phipps, British ambassador, visited him and had to listen to a half hour's explosion on the "Red menace" before he could get down to the business of his diplomatic call. Hitler's associates have to spend a lot of time playing his favorite pieces for him on a piano-organ which he keeps in his room. They say it helps him sleep, especially when they play Wagner. There are reports that Hitler is definitely breaking up, but The Week thinks these are exaggerated; he has often had these attacks, though never quite so badly as this time, and will probably recover. The significance of this particular one is that it is holding up an important diplomatic correspondence.

Cable from France

THE past week has seen a remarkable outbreak of strike movements in the metallurgical industry in the Paris belt and elsewhere. At first some 35,000 workers whose ranks were later augmented to 100,000, presented demands for wage increases, improved working conditions and union recognition. To forestall strikebreakers and a lockout they camped in the plants. There was no disorder, violence or sabotage. In the Red Belt, senators, mayors, aldermen and workers organized a commissary which supplied truckloads of food to the strikers.

During the several days of peaceful occupation the workers ate, slept, played music and games in the buildings and yards of the plants. Some employers actually begged the authorities to refrain from dislodging the workers by force and to avoid provoking trouble.

After three days of negotiations the bosses capitulated and granted all demands: the 40-hour week, wage increases, vacations with pay, collective bargaining agreements, union recognition, no discrimination against strikers. But the capitalist press and the political ward-heelers endeavored to sow panic. Certain ministers of the Sarraut cabinet, hating to relinquish their portfolios, took hope and urged Premier Sarraut to stay in office and apply drastic repression against the strikers. Others took a long view and advised the government to resign forthwith and bequeath the complications of the strike to their successors, thus hoping to create dissension in the People's Front. The newspapers of the Right, surveying the situation, predicted drastic calamities and recalled the Russian

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Revolution which began with strikes. Workers, they lamented, encouraged by political triumph, were resorting to direct action and not trusting to have their own leaders in the Blum government. Some sheets pretended to have inside information that the Communists and C.G.T. were determined on revolution. Fearing the moderation of the People's Front, they deliberately tried to force Blum's hand.

In a warm speech before the Socialist Congress, May 31, Léon Blum contemptuously flayed the panic-mongering campaign. The political victory of the workers at the polls, he said, correctly and actually led to workers asserting their long overdue economic claims, particularly after the long period of depression which enabled employers to profit by a glutted labor market and to cut wages. Those beaten reactionaries, he added, who solicitously warn him against playing the role of Kerensky to some future Lenin, are wasting their sympathy. In the first place, the Communists loyally offered the People's Front government uninterrupted support in accordance with their campaign promises. In the second place, Blum added, he had no intention of failing but should he fail it would not be the Communists who would profit, but the fascists. The workers' interests, regardless of party labels, are indivisible, Léon Blum concluded.

North China's Crisis

WITH official encouragement and the protection of Japanese military authorities, smuggling into China has grown into a big business: a total of $63,000,000 last year according to the Bank of China.

Smuggling has given Japanese capitalists a powerful weapon with which to oust British, American and other foreign goods from the Chinese market. It has provided an outlet for Japanese commodities and has given Japanese military authorities additional foreign balance to increase military establishments.

While Chinese, British and American protests point out that the presence of Japanese troops in North China has made impossible the prevention of smuggling, Japan has answered by moving additional large detachments of troops into the area. The military authorities utilized the old trick of creating an "incident"—on May 30, a railway bridge between Tientsin and Tangku was mysteriously bombed. This "incident" foreshadows serious developments in the near future. The total number of Japanese troops in the Peiping and Tientsin areas is estimated at 20,000. In addition, Japan maintains large skeleton forces of officers scattered throughout the most strategic points in North China and capable of handling immensely augmented forces that can be sped into the region at short notice.

Although smuggling has prepared the way for additional troops, this immense army is not present solely for the protection of the smuggling industry. The immediate aim seems to be to consolidate Japan's hold on Chahar and Hopei and to seize the three remaining North China provinces of Shangting, Shansi and Sin Yuan. Such a move, if successful, would not only increase the danger of a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union but would greatly intensify the antagonism between Japan, Great Britain and the United States.

The most hopeful sign in the present crisis is the student protest movement. Following the example of Tientsin, students in Peiping declared a strike against the increase of the Japanese garrison. On May 30, over 2,000 students demonstrated in the streets against Japanese imperialism. A boycott on Japanese goods has been inaugurated. A clear reflection of the strength of the anti-Japanese movement is the broadcast of anti-Japanese speeches over radio stations owned and operated by the Nanking government; these stations would only allow such speeches in the face of the strongest mass pressure.

Whether Japan can be stopped and the war danger in the Far East postponed depends upon the development of the anti-Japanese united front in China and the concerted effort of all foreign governments and people, who—though for different reasons—oppose Japanese expansion in China. Americans can make public, through resolutions or letters to the press, their support of the Chinese people. As the crisis in North China develops, the mass anti-Japanese movement will undoubtedly gain momentum. But it will need ever-increasing support from its friends abroad.

Another Retreat

NINE weeks is a pretty short time in which to throw 400,000 people out of employment, yet the Roosevelt regime has managed to drop that many from the federal relief rolls between March 7 and May 16. According to Harry L. Hopkins, W.P.A. administrator, it is planned to drop 50,000 more from the federal relief program by July 1 of this year. Labor leaders who think that Roosevelt is a Messiah rendering a Farmer-Labor Party unnecessary ought to consider these facts.

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EDITORS:
JOSEPH FREEMAN, MICHAEL GOLD, RUSSELL T. LIMBACH, BRUCE MINTON, ISIDOR SCHNEIDER
Contributing Editors: GRANVILLE HICKS, JOSHUA KUNITZ, LOREN MILLER
WILLIAM BROWDER, *Business Manager* WILLIAM RANDORF, *Circulation Manager*

Published weekly by WEEKLY MASSES CO., INC., at 31 East 27th Street, New York City. Copyright, 1936, NEW MASSES, INC., Reg. U. S. Patent Office. Drawings and text may not be printed without permission. Entered as second-class matter, June 24, 1926, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies 15 cents. Subscription $4.50 a year in U. S. and Colonies and Mexico. Six months $2.50; three months $1.25; Foreign $5.50 a year; six months $3; three months $1.50. In Canada, $5 a year, $2.75 for six months. Subscribers are notified that no change in address can be effected in less than two weeks. THE NEW MASSES welcomes the work of new writers in prose and verse, and of artists. Manuscripts and drawings must be accompanied by return postage. THE NEW MASSES pays for contributions.

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A National F.-L.P. in 1936

WILLIAM F. DUNNE

CHICAGO.

THE Farmer-Labor Conference, called by a subcommittee of the state committee of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Association, in session here Saturday and Sunday, May 30 and 31, agreed unanimously on four important decisions.

Some 100 invited representatives from twenty states were present. Others sent messages of sympathy and support. The majority of those present came from local unions, city central labor bodies, Farmer-Labor Parties or groups, farmers' cooperative organizations, Negro organizations and groups representing the unemployed, such as the Workers Alliance.

Sidney Hillman, president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America and Fitzpatrick, president of the Chicago Federation of Labor sent personal representatives. Earl Browder represented the Communist Party.

The four major decisions of the Conference were:

(1) that a national Farmer-Labor Party was a necessity in the presidential election year;
(2) to organize support on a national scale for state and congressional Farmer-Labor Party tickets;
(3) to make the state committee of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party the core of the national organization with an advisory council of twenty-five to cooperate with it; more members may be added if necessary;
(4) to adopt a declaration of principles.

This declaration states that the two old parties are unwilling and unable to fight against monopoly and to establish measures for the social security of the majority of the population. It also calls for the protection of the people against "the economic hazards inherent in our present economic system." The declaration urges federal compensation "for all who are deprived of normal income by unemployment, old age, physical disability, maternity, widowhood and similar reasons." To be financed by taxation amounting to a capital levy, this social insurance system aims to pay compensation at least equal to the last earnings but in no case less than necessary to guarantee a decent living standard.

The labor section of the Conference declaration emphasizes "labor's basic role in producing the nation's wealth" and pledges support, "through appropriate legislation," to raise wages; improve working conditions; bring higher living standards; for the 30-hour week "without reduction in weekly earnings, for union wages on all public works." The declaration demands "the unrestricted right" to organize; to strike and picket. It calls for the "outlawing" of company unions, industrial spies and injunctions and demands the cessation of the use of "military and other coercive measures and forces against labor." Labor is entitled, says the declaration, to benefit from the economies in production resulting from the use of "labor-saving machinery and devices and from mergers, consolidations and coordination of properties and enterprises."

In regard to the struggle for peace the committee report to the conference said: "We are unalterably opposed to imperialist wars and favor such measures as will strengthen collective security against war, curb the war-makers and their huge military budgets and prevent traffic in war materials with aggressor nations. We are committed to a program that will ensure the maintenance of peace."

Mrs. Arthur LeSueur of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party amended the report to include her party's declaration on war and neutrality. Another amendment clarified the definition of "traffic in war materials." On the suggestion of Earl Browder, the final formulation included the amendments.

The Declaration of Principles accuses "the present system of fast destroying youth" by denying opportunity "for useful and creative work." It pledges support for measures that will "provide adequate funds for a youth program of education and work."

The conference declaration on democratic rights is a challenge to reaction in all forms; representing the opinion and determination of a broad section of the population, it is of first-class importance to all opponents of monopoly capitalism, its government, its glee singers and its gunmen. This section states:

> We stand for the preservation and extension of the democratic rights of a free people.
>
> We therefore favor and will support such measures as are necessary to curb the usurped power of the Supreme Court and reassert the power of Congress to enact social and labor legislation for the general welfare.
>
> We stand for the abolition of all restrictions on the franchise; for unrestricted freedom of speech, of the press and of the right to assemble and demonstrate; for unconditional equal rights for Negroes and against discrimination, segregation and lynchings to which they are subject; against deportation and other forms of persecution of the foreign born and for the restoration of the right of political asylum to fighters against reaction and fascism.

The section on agriculture declares against evictions and seizures of farm property. It proposes the legislative enactment of a long moratorium. The conference placed itself on record against crop reduction, for increased agricultural production with government guarantees for the average cost. It supported democratically controlled cooperatives.

The decisions of the conference were not made without extensive discussions, many times of a sharp nature. There were differences both as to the goal and methods. The pressure of the Roosevelt administration was felt in the conference. Governor Olson's message supporting the conference clearly indicated his support of Roosevelt. Members of the A.C.W. at the conference, fresh from its convention, knew that President Hillman and the convention had endorsed Roosevelt.

A telegram from John L. Lewis urged greater cooperation of farmers and workers for liberal social legislation but categorically declared that the Non-Partisan Political League was for Roosevelt. There were forces in the conference that awaited only a good opportunity to do some Red-baiting. Among these were members of Congressman Amlie's Commonwealth Federation who circulated one of his letters condemning the conference and Communists.

Earl Browder's speech at the Saturday evening session did much to dispel the unfounded fears of those who thought that Communists were present to "capture" the conference.

> It has been charged that we seek control of the Farmer-Labor Party. If true, that would be a great stupidity on our part. Control is the last thing we need or seek. A mass movement should have no fears. We want only such influence in the Farmer-Labor Party councils that can be exerted through the democratic process of convincing arguments, with loyal and energetic work.
>
> Can this conference proceed with its work, with a few Communists in its midst, with confidence that it is on the correct path to success? Yes, it can, if it recalls the recent events in France and Spain, where the People's Front, including the Communists, saved those countries from the Hitler system. It can, if it looks over the country and sees, in city after city, in the trade unions, among the unemployed, the youth, the students, the Negroes, among the local Farmer-Labor Parties—everywhere, the most successful movements are those which have full unity, which exclude only enemies.

Efforts will be made especially to nominate and elect congressional and state legislative candidates in favorable territory. Around such a campaign the chief activity of the growing Farmer-Labor Party movement, stimulated and given a more stable organizational base and center by the Chicago conference, will concentrate. It can be predicted with some assurance that official labor leaders committed to Roosevelt will not strain themselves toward electing Farmer-Laborites.

The fate of a national Farmer-Labor Party this year depends on the rapidity and solidity with which Farmer-Labor Party movements can be made important factors in a number of states and industrial centers. The great virtue of the Chicago conference was that it clarified and speeded up this process.

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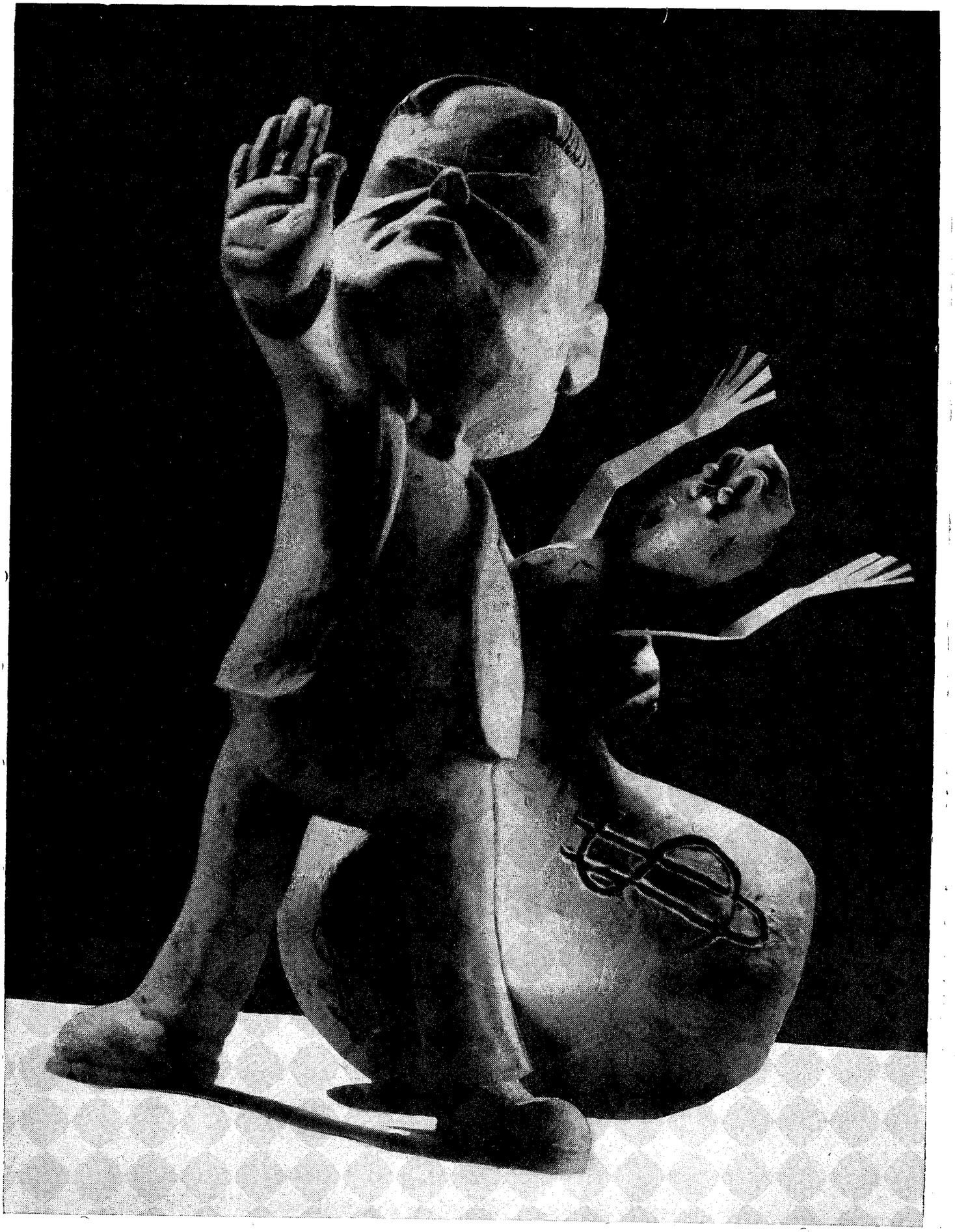

Robert Cronbach

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That Man Landon, That Man

W. C. KELLY

IN politics, Governor Alf M. Landon, of Kansas, is a conservative-liberal-conservative.

Of course, I'm not sure the man I talked to was Governor Landon, but he looked very much like Mr. Landon and he was sitting in a railroad station in Topeka. He had a nose like Governor Landon's and the way he looked at you, democratically, like an oil millionaire, over his spectacles—and he didn't deny that he was Governor Landon.

I went to Topeka expressly to interview the Governor. A number of others have, too, and when I arrived I couldn't find hotel accommodations. I tried to get a house, but a great many professional interviewers have already moved to Topeka with their families. So many interviewers, in fact, and Hearst cameramen that I decided to go to the Texas Centennial Exposition instead. It was on my way back from Texas that I got off the train at Topeka to walk around, strolled into the station and ran across a man who must have been Governor Landon. He was sitting in the station, asleep. I suppose I would not have noticed him particularly if he hadn't kept saying over and over in his sleep: "Balanced budget! Balanced budget! Balanced budget!" I knew right then that this wasn't just anyone. He had to be a Republican candidate for President. This was Topeka. Well, if it wasn't Governor Landon, what is your guess?

I tapped the man on the shoulder several times before he awakened. "Yes," he said, on opening his eyes, "but don't quote me—"

"How did you know I was an interviewer?" I asked.

"This is Topeka, isn't it?" he exclaimed. "I am confident we will win. I'm not afraid of the Stop-Landon movement. They can't stop a man, can they, if they don't know where he is—they can't find him—that's why I'm here at the railroad station. It's the last place in the world they'd think of looking for me. I expect to be here until after the Convention."

The man wore suspenders. It was reasonable to believe that the Governor of Kansas would wear suspenders, and what he said certainly sounded reasonable—"they can't stop a man if they can't find him." I suggested: "Most of the boys at the Executive Mansion think *they* are interviewing Governor Landon."

Governor Landon smiled.

We all like the Governor's smile. "If we can keep the campaign down to a contest between your smile and Mr. Roosevelt's smile," I said, "you will have a good chance—"

"You take it for granted that I'm going

to be nominated," he smiled, more broadly than before. I wish all of you could have seen *that* smile of Governor Landon's. You would never doubt for one moment that he would make a wonderful President.

A flash and he was over to the serious side, the side that shows how he fought his way up, after his father struck oil. "But the election will not be a walk-away," he said. "Mr. Roosevelt has a real radio voice."

"That throb—"

"Yes, that throb in his voice over the radio. Some people think I haven't a chance against that throb. I don't know. . . ."

"Rudy Vallee has one of those throbs, too," I said. "Where does he stand politically?"

"Rudy, I think, is a liberal-conservative," he said, a little sadly, "whereas I am a conservative-liberal-conservative. However, I've heard the story about Rudy that you have reference to. The whisperers say Rudy swallowed a poker chip accidentally when he was two years old and he has had that throb ever since. Therefore, Mr. Roosevelt must have had something to do with poker chips. But I don't want to be President if I can't win without bringing up the poker chip issue!" Governor Landon snapped his fingers in a manner that indicated finality.

"You are against a whispering campaign?" I added.

"Yes, and no," smiled the Governor. "Yes—*and no.* The whispers are the most interesting part of any Presidential campaign. But whispering in the past has been done on too loose a basis. There should be more organization. Candidates have waited for everybody and anybody to start whispering. I am going to have a 'whispering manager' and start the proper kind of improper whispers about myself early in the campaign."

The man looked at me over his spectacles, and I am sure that he raised his eyebrows more than was necessary. "You *are* Governor Landon, aren't you?" I asked.

He said nothing, reflectively.

"You remind me a lot of Calvin Coolidge, Governor," I said.

Governor Landon beamed. "Say that again—"

I repeated the statement several times. The Governor never failed to beam. "Now," I continued, "Governor, just what are you for?"

"I am against the Roosevelt administration," he replied quickly, "dead against it."

"But what are you *for?*"

"I am against the Roosevelt administration," he repeated firmly, "not *for* it."

"I mean," I said, "that you are for a balanced budget, the Dionne Quintuplets, and things like that—"

"Absolutely." There was a sincere ring in his voice, and a very definite ring, too.

"How are you going to balance the budget?" I asked.

The man looked at me suspiciously. "I am not writing the Republican platform alone," he replied.

It was Governor Landon, all right.

"But," I said, "getting back to the Dionne Quintuplets—suppose the British Empire goes to smash—you know, strange things happen nowadays—what would you do as President, just what would become of the Dionne Quintuplets?"

He looked at me as much as to say, "What do you mean?"

"Would you march the American Army into Canada and save the Dionnes?"

"I can't answer right off," he said, "but from what I've heard I believe I'd save everyone except Mr. Dionne."

Just then a special train rolled into the station, with Landon banners, and a band playing the Star-Spangled Banner. The man stood up. A great many people got off the train and they all looked like interviewers. "Good-bye," said the man. "See you later." He ran out of the station and disappeared up the street.

If it wasn't Governor Landon, whoever it was has a good chance for the nomination.

(Author's Note: This is the first of a series of interviews with leading Presidential candidates. It also concludes the series.)

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Who Backs the Black Legion?

JOHN L. SPIVAK

DETROIT.

NOT two weeks ago, but in August, 1935, the state of Michigan and industrial centers like Pontiac and Flint, learned of the existence of a secret terroristic organization known as the Black Legion. The matter was somehow promptly hushed up and forgotten. In Detroit, at about the same time, a prominent politician, in the course of an argument with Mayor Couzens, casually took a bullet from a vest pocket and flipped it in the air. It was the secret sign of the Bullet Club of Pontiac, more popularly known as the Black Legion. The politician was trying to find out if the Mayor was a member. The Mayor ignored it and the incident was forgotten.

On the night of May 12, 1936, some fifty members of the Wolverine Republican League met in Findlater Temple in Detroit, a favorite meeting hall of the Ku Klux Klan some five or six years ago. In the smoke-filled room the group, presided over by Harvey Davis, an employe of the Public Lighting Commission, decided to give Charles A. Poole, a young W.P.A. worker, "a necktie party" because he knew too much about the secret organization, and the morning of May 13 Poole's body was found with five .45 caliber slugs in it.

Within a few days after this murder fifteen men were under arrest in connection with it, warrants were out for ten more and the fourth largest city in the United States awoke to find it had a secret terroristic organization in its midst, an organization with members in high places and that Dayton Dean, an electrician also employed by the Public Lighting Commission and a member of the Wolverine Republican League, had cheerfully admitted pumping the lead into Poole when the "necktie party" tired of waiting for the rope which failed to arrive.

A furious press and citizenry demanded the end of the organization, and politicians, nervous because they did not know who would be named next, rushed into print with statements denouncing the organization and insisting upon a probe to the very roots, and assuring the people that now the "back of the Black Legion has been broken." Whether this is so or not remains to be seen. Most observers feel that the ramifications are only dimly being realized.

The story of the Black Legion, by now publicized the world over, is one of the most fantastic in American history. That the arrest of those already in jail has only scratched the surface of a complicated terroristic political organization, is now generally admitted by Michigan state officials, all of whom have the jitters as to who the real heads are and what its real motive is.

The outstanding facts so far brought out in the amazing disclosures show

1. Members of the Black Legion murdered Poole.
2. Fifteen men have been arrested in connection with it and warrants are out for ten others.
3. Other mysterious deaths, floggings, bombings and arson are attributed to the Black Legion.
4. Its members, despite all assurances that they will be protected, are in mortal terror of the Legion's vengeance and are fearful of speaking.
5. The Black Legion sought members particularly in public office, especially among those who were armed like policemen and prison guards and if not armed, were instructed to buy arms.
6. Black Legion members have been found in high political office.
7. The terroristic organization was used as a political machine, controlling several cities.
8. The state of Michigan knew of the terroristic organization in the summer of 1935 and hushed it up.
9. The leaders so far disclosed are members of the Wolverine Republican League.
10. The decision to kill Poole was made at a meeting of the secret terroristic group masquerading as the Wolverine Republican League.

The long, blood-curdling oath which every member took while kneeling at the feet of his sponsor (who held a loaded pistol to the supplicant's heart), was for a peculiar 100-percent Americanism and swore, among other things:

> In the name of God and the devil, one to reward, the other to punish, and by the Powers of Light and Darkness, Good and Evil, here under the Black Arch of Heaven's Avenging Symbol, I pledge and consecrate my heart, my brain, my body and my limbs, and swear by all the Powers of Heaven and Hell, to devote my life to the obedience of my superiors, and that no danger or peril shall deter me from executing their orders.
>
> That I will exert every possible means in my power for the extermination of the Anarchist, Communist, the Roman Hierarchy and their abettors.
>
> I will show no mercy, but strike with an avenging arm as long as breath remains.
>
> I further pledge my heart, my brain, my body and my limbs, never to betray a comrade; that I will submit to all the tortures mankind can inflict, and suffer the most horrible death, rather than reveal a single word of this my oath.

In the midst of the furore aroused by confessions of men arrested and the disclosures that the Black Legion extended into official places, including the police, Duncan McCrea, Detroit's prosecutor, announced that he intended to probe this mysterious organization until he got to its roots and prosecute to the utmost all those guilty in any way.

Just about the time everybody looked at McCrea hopefully as the savior, The Detroit Times, a Hearst paper which had been gunning for the prosecutor, published an application card to the Black Legion, signed by the prosecutor himself on Dec. 29, 1934. McCrea did not deny his signature, he merely said that he may have signed it because he was in the heat of a campaign and was joining anything. McCrea was not removed from his office as prosecutor as a result of this fresh disclosure, but Attorney General Crowley stepped in and suggested that both of them handle the case. In Lansing it is generally known that all state officials are jittery as to who is a member and who is not, and it is thought that the Attorney General's presence would ease their minds.

Though McCrea denied knowing that he had joined the Black Legion, the sponsor is one Ira E. Albright of Detroit who used to be an investigator in McCrea's office. McCrea fired him some time ago.

In McCrea's office today is another investigator, former member of the Klan named Charles Spare. On March 22, 1935, Spare sent out an anti-Catholic letter. This is known to McCrea who ignores it.

The Black Legion has state-wide ramifications with a membership difficult to estimate but variously placed at between 5,000 and 40,000. It seems to be chiefly centered in the industrial cities like Pontiac, where it tried to get control of the city government some fourteen months ago by terroristic methods. Death was threatened to several candidates seeking office in November, 1934. One former member of the Black Legion who would not vote as instructed was kidnaped, tied to a tree and flogged.

The Black Legion was originally organized in Pontiac as "The Bullet Club," so designated because members carried a bullet around which they flipped in the air playfully when they wanted to identify themselves to someone whom they were not certain was a member. The regalia was the same—black hoods with white skull and cross-bones.

Evidence of their terroristic activity was collected by Arthur P. Bogue, prosecutor. Bogue was turned out of office and David C. Pence became prosecutor. Pence refused to prosecute, saying the evidence was insufficient. Pence has since admitted being a member of the Black Legion.

V. H. Effinger of Lima, Ohio, is reputed to be the leader of the Black Legion for the "Western District" embracing Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. Evidence points that he receives 10 cents a month dues from the members and that he and his state subordinates sell $1.25 robes for $6.75. Nevertheless, Effinger and the other leaders of the Black Legion live in poor homes and are obviously not well-to-do. It is quite apparent that though the old Klan was a big money-maker for the leaders, the Black Legion is not. This gives rise to the belief that the Black Legion has some other motive behind it,

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greater even than the established fact that it mixes in practical politics and that one of the things a member is supposed to do is to help another Legionnaire get a job some place in the governmental machine.

Besides the various bombings, floggings and kidnapings attributed to the terroristic organization, the most serious charges concern other mysterious and unsolved deaths.

Paul Every, a Jackson prison guard, is recorded as having died of "diabetes." After the wholesale arrests of Black Legion members following the Poole murder, his widow named Ray Ernest, another guard at the prison, as having organized and carried through a flogging of Every for refusing to join the Black Legion, and that Every died as a result of the flogging. In Every's home were found guns, Black Legion regalia, letters from Effinger and Art Lupp, Sr., appointing Ernest "Brigadier-General" of the Black Legion, and letters linking the Wolverine Republican League with the terroristic organization. Ernest and several other guards were placed under arrest, charged with kidnaping and assault.

Other correspondence seized in Ernest's home established that he is in charge of the terrorists in thirteen counties, commanding "Brigade No. 3" which takes in Jackson, Allegan, Barry, Eaton, Ingham, Van Buren, Kalamazoo, Calhoun, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, Branch and Hillsdale counties.

There are five brigades in Michigan alone with a total possible membership of 135,000.

Rudolph J. Anderson of Detroit was found dead in his car on December 16 with a .30 caliber rifle bullet through his heart and an army rifle beside him. The death was recorded as "suicide." Anderson was an employe of the Public Lighting Commission which also employed Harvey Davis, who confessed to presiding over the meeting at which it was decided to murder Poole and Dayton Dean, the "trigger man." Both Davis and Dean admit having known him but deny any connection with his death. Anderson's body was found in the region where Poole was murdered.

John L. Bielak, of Detroit, Hudson Motor Car Company employe, was killed near Monroe in 1934. Bielak was shot to death by a party of men in two automobiles who took him to the death scene. In his pocket was found a membership card to the Wolverine Republican League. Bielak also had literature from two labor unions in the Hudson plant in his pockets at the time he was killed.

George Marchuk, a member of the Communist Party, treasurer of the Auto Workers Union, was killed on December 22, 1933, while on his way to a union meeting.

Alfred Roughley of Detroit was found dead October 28, 1935, in a garage, death apparently due to carbon monoxide poisoning. It has since been established that Roughley was a Black Legion organizer.

Oliver Hurkett of Detroit was found dead in his car on April 25, 1935. Relatives say he was a member of a "secret organization."

Garfield Wolfe of Jackson, Michigan, was found dead in 1932 with a ruptured liver. He died after a party at the farm of Arthur Silvius whose estranged wife says he belonged to "an anti-Catholic secret organization."

The Wolverine Republican League, at one of whose secret meetings it was decided to kill Poole, plays a very important part in the whole set-up of the Black Legion, a part which is apparently being played down by the press and the officials. The club was formed last fall by a merger of two Republican groups: the Wayne County Republican Club and the Seventeenth Congressional District Republican Club. The Wolverine, however, is not listed with the regular Wayne County Republican Clubs. Its headquarters is given on its letterhead as 2120 Union Guardian Building. This is the law office of Harry Z. Marx and Marion L. Leacock, prominent Detroit attorneys.

At the time the first arrests were being made in the Poole case, Marx and Leacock, personal attorneys to Detroit's Chief of Police Heinrich A. Pickert, were representing the chief of police in ouster proceedings launched by labor groups.

The President of the Wolverine Club is L. J. Black, Clerk for Common Pleas Judge Eugene Sharp.

Judge Sharp is one of the sponsors for the pistol permit given Arthur F. Lupp, Sr., "Brigadier-General" of the Black Legion, who, Dean confessed, sold him the pistol with which he killed Poole.

Harvey Davis, a "colonel" in the Black Legion, who confessed to having presided at the meeting at which it was decided to kill Poole, is on the entertainment committee of the Wolverine Republican League.

Roy Lorance, held in connection with the murder, is on the Wolverine's membership committee.

Erwin D. Lee, held in connection with the murder, is on the membership committee.

J. H. Bannerman, held in connection with the murder, is a Wolverine Club director.

Jesse J. Pettijohn, Ecorse Township Clerk and until recently an Ecorse trustee, is listed as an official of the Wolverine League, but denied membership in the Black Legion. In his home were two automatic pistols and a shotgun.

Marion L. Leacock, attorney, is chairman of the Wolverine's resolution committee.

Frank P. Darin, attorney and former state legislator from River Rouge, is on the Wolverine's legislative committee.

Oren A. Johnson, former Assistant Prosecutor, is also on its legislative committee.

Harry Z. Marx, attorney, in whose offices the club made its headquarters, is on the Wolverine Republican League's delegate committee. Marx said he was a member of the Wolverine Club, but knew little of its activities. "Some time after the club was organized," he said, "a fellow by the name of Dewey who was the secretary, asked me if they could use my office as a mailing address. I said they could and some mail came here, but I never had anything to do with it. They didn't send any mail from here, just came and picked it up. I never heard of any such thing as the Black Legion."

Harry Z. Marx is a young and successful Detroit attorney, and has achieved considerable prominence in Detroit as one of the leading spirits in anti-Communist activities. Last year he was in charge of the Americanization Committee of the American Legion.

Though the headquarters of the Wolverine Republican League was in Marx's office, he denied ever having heard of the Black Legion. The facts, however, show:

One George Woodward, arraigned before Judge Arthur E. Gordon in Recorder's Court on a charge of gross indecency, protested that he was being framed by the Black Legion. "I was invited to join the Black Legion and refused; now this comes along."

"Who invited you?" asked the judge.

"Attorney Harry Z. Marx," said Woodward in open court.

On August 16, 1935, three men were arrested by state troopers near Fairfield in Lenawee County. They were Andrew Martin, Ellsworth Shinaberry and Ray Hepner, all of Detroit. State troopers found guns, the regalia of the Black Legion and Legion literature attacking Communists, Jews, Catholics and Negroes in the car. The troopers reported that they were organizers for the Black Legion.

On August 20 Virgil H. Effinger, L. J. Black, president of the Wolverine Republican League, and Harry Z. Marx personally called upon Lavon B. Kuney, Lenawee prosecutor, at Adrian, Mich., and asked for the release of the three men. Kuney refused. The men, however, were subsequently released on the charge that their car had been illegally searched.

Thomas R. Craig, Black Legion member held in the Poole murder, was recently tried in a legislative recount fraud case. His attorney was Harry Z. Marx.

Former Governor Wilbur M. Bruckner of Michigan addressed the Wolverine Republican League on April 16. He was introduced by Harry Z. Marx.

Harry Z. Marx's real name is Harry B. Zirkalose (born Harmon Zirkaloser). After establishing a reputation as a lawyer under the name of Zirkalose, he suddenly had it changed last year to Marx, giving as his reason that Zirkalose was difficult to pronounce. In his application to be admitted to the bar in Michigan he stated that the nationality of his parents was American. His parents were German.

It is too early to draw conclusions as to the real powers behind the Black Legion. Those under arrest so far are merely dull-witted clods who were being used. So far presentation of the bald facts seems to be most important. By next week it may be possible to shed a little more light on the real forces behind the terroristic organization.

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The Socialists Hesitate

JOSEPH FREEMAN

MY dispatch from the Socialist Party convention in Cleveland was wired just after the Militants, aided by the Wisconsin delegation, had finally excluded from the party the Old Guard group headed by Louis Waldman. Once that step had been taken, the relationship of the various factions left within the party came clearly and sharply to the surface. For the renovated Socialist Party is by no means a homogeneous organization solidly united around a set of definite policies. It is more than ever a party of diverse groups pulling in different directions.

The expelled Old Guard continues to play a role in the shaping of party policy. From his headquarters at the Hotel Hollenden, Louis Waldman announced that the right wing would form the Social-Democratic Federation to fight for the reformist policies which his group advocates. Subsequently he addressed the convention of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers from the platform on which, thirty-six hours earlier, he had demanded the seating of his forty-four delegates by the Socialist Party. On behalf of the Amalgamated, Sidney Hillman had called for the support of Roosevelt in the coming election campaign. Waldman, himself inclined in that direction, had already announced that his group would not support Norman Thomas.

Throughout the convention, Thomas and his supporters refrained from stressing the fascist danger in the Liberty League-Hearst-Republican combine. They concentrated their attack on Roosevelt, arguing that the "New Deal, like the Old Deal, has utterly failed," and that under the Roosevelt administration there has been an unabated growth of "fascist trends." The Old Guard, on the other hand, feels that Roosevelt's policies, while not socialist, are at any rate progressive. They argue that Thomas' sharp attacks on the New Deal will alienate many workers from the Socialist Party. Now that they have founded a rival party which will not support Thomas for President, they flirt with the Amalgamated, the Dubinsky group in the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, the Lewis group and William Green, all of whom openly support Roosevelt.

But here the differences between Thomas and the Old Guard are not made sufficiently clear. At the convention, the Militants sharply dissociated themselves from Roosevelt. But statements by Thomas in The Socialist Call have tended to confuse the issue. To say, as Thomas recently did, that "Roosevelt is the best that can be obtained under capitalism" plays directly into the hands of those trade-union leaders who openly support the President's reelection.

The main concessions which the Militants made to the Old Guard, however, were on the questions of the united front with the Communists and on centralized organization. The convention's actions on these points can best be explained by the relations of group forces within the Socialist Party today. Even after the group headed by Louis Waldman, Algernon Lee and James Oneal was finally cleaned out, the Old Guard continued to have strong delegations within the convention. Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Rhode Island, Washington and Montana left Cleveland threatening to bolt the party and join the proposed Social-Democratic Federation. But while the convention lasted, these delegations retained their seats and fought for Old Guard policies from the floor. This tactic was decided upon at a caucus held in the Hollenden Hotel in which these states and the Waldman group participated. The intransigeance of the Old Guard expressed itself in the refusal of Jasper McLevy's Connecticut delegation to support the nomination of Thomas. The strength of the Old Guard within the convention was based not only on the number of delegates it had, but also on its control of Reading and Bridgeport.

Equally powerful was the Wisconsin delegation headed by Mayor Dan Hoan. This group supported the Militants in their conflict with the Old Guard. But Hoan is no less conservative than Waldman. Milwaukee's lanky, homespun Mayor is primarily a machine politician with little interest in socialist theory and no desire for revolutionary action. At this moment he is busy dissolving his own socialist organization in Wisconsin in a farmer-labor group which he hopes will send him to the U. S. Senate. If the seven states listed above carry out their threat to bolt the party, Hoan's group will constitute the extreme right wing.

Then there are the newly-admitted Trotskyites, vanguard of their group which will enter the Socialist Party in toto with the fond hope of controlling it. The Trotskyite delegates have not succeeded so far in giving the party propaganda the sharp anti-Soviet flavor they desire; but they have joined the Old Guard delegations in fighting against a united front with the Communists and against entering a Farmer-Labor Party.

Working toward a left policy for the party is the group of Militants. As a rule, their spokesman is Norman Thomas, but he voices rather than shapes their policies. His own tendency is to take a center position between the Militants and the Wisconsin group. The slogan of an "all-inclusive" party is his.

Mayor Hoan's group, the centrists like Thomas and the lefts were united in the struggle against the Old Guard in New York and other groups. On all other questions there were differences of opinion. There were, for instance, sharp debates on the question of party organization. Left elements pressed for centralization; the centrists fought for state autonomy with the National Executive Committee as final arbiter. On this question important concessions were made to the extreme right wing. The Militant majority introduced a motion to establish a regional committee for the western states with an N.E.C. member in charge. This was a healthy step toward centralization. But it was abandoned under the furious attack of the right-wing elements. Instead, the convention granted the western states the right to elect their own committee and to designate its chairman. This served to strengthen the reformist principle of local autonomy. The powers of the National Executive Committee were further restricted by a constitutional amendment granting each state the last word in regard to membership.

THE policy of concessions to the conservatives also marked the convention's disposal of the Communist Party's proposal for a united presidential ticket this year. Whatever some of the more alert Militants may have actually thought about this suggestion, their group as a whole considered this an opportunity for showing the Old Guard that their charges of "Communism" were untrue. Maynard Krueger, economics professor at the University of Chicago, was selected to decline the offer publicly. It was all neatly primed.

"Is there any delegate in this hall," Krueger shouted, "who believes that the best interests of Socialism would be served by a joint ticket with the Communists?"

"No," the delegates yelled. The Communist Party letter was tabled—a victory for the Old Guard, which had made the united front the main issue in its fight for party control.

On the question of a Farmer-Labor Party the convention made a progressive gesture; but that gesture was vague and formal. By a vote of 109 to 64, the delegates expressed the willingness of the Socialist Party to support a "genuine" Farmer-Labor Party. Not a word was said about building such a party this year, and a definite refusal to take part in the Chicago conference which is taking steps in that direction. The views of the right wing on this all-important question were stated by Mayor Hoan in his keynote speech at the opening of the convention.

Socialists have ever since 1921 advocated the *eventual* formation of a Farmer-Labor Party, but

the demand for a farmer-labor party is not sufficient to warrant starting one in 1936. There are

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> not enough of the sound, substantial elements in the labor movement ready to sever all connections with the old parties and come out for a new organization based on a new economic premise. Hence the Socialist Party is opposed to any move to start a party this year on a nationwide scale.

Hoan added, however, that there are some sections of the country which are more advanced than others; in such sections he favored local parties.

It was this reformist viewpoint which was embodied in the convention's Farmer-Labor Party resolution. As in the case of the united front, the conservatives had their way. The Socialists went on record as favoring a Farmer-Labor Party in general and eventually, but (unless the more progressive elements in the party get busy) the S.P. is to do nothing about it this year when conditions make a Farmer-Labor Party imperative. If a nationwide Farmer-Labor Party movement gains momentum this year, the resolution may enable the Socialists to enter it.

So far, however, the S.P. is coy. This was made clear at a symposium which I attended on returning to New York from the Cleveland convention. Speaking under the auspices of Local 22, International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Clarence Hathaway of the Communist Party, Gus Tyler of the Socialist Party; and Jay Lovestone of the C.P.O. outlined the views of their respective groups in regard to the Farmer-Labor Party. More than 2,000 trade-union workers crowded the balconies and lower floor of the grand ballroom of the Hotel Delano at six o'clock. They came straight from work, missed their suppers and listened tensely for more than three hours while the speakers presented their arguments. This response to the symposium indicated a much greater interest in a Farmer-Labor Party this year than the Socialist Party is willing to admit.

The audience enthusiastically applauded Tyler's statement that the Socialist convention had declared for a Farmer-Labor Party. Thereupon, the speaker proceeded to describe so many "dangers" and reservations that the resolution for a Farmer-Labor Party was nullified. He went into a long historical review of farmer-labor parties in the United States from which he drew the mechanical conclusion that they had all gone to pieces because they lacked class orientation. He criticized the French People's Front as a morass of class-collaboration which tended to cripple the working class. "We Socialists," he said, "would rather wait, carrying on our work within the labor movement and build a sound labor party."

Tyler's argument, sectarian in the extreme, served to confuse the meaning of the Cleveland resolution. Lovestone, on the other hand, contributed some confusions of his own. He criticized the Socalist Party for rejecting the united front with the Communists and for remaining aloof from a labor party; but proceeded to attack the idea of such a movement as a people's front. He advocated instead a labor party based exclusively on the trade unions and other working-class groups. Such a party would presumably keep out farmers and middle-class groups.

BOTH TYLER and Lovestone discussed the Farmer-Labor Party in abstract terms, with practically no reference to the actual problems now confronting the American people. Hathaway, editor of The Daily Worker, presented the Communist viewpoint by an analysis of specific issues. He was the only one of the three speakers who analyzed the concentration of reactionary forces in the Liberty League-Hearst-Republican combine which he described as the bearer of fascism. The only way that reaction can be headed off, he said, will be through the creation of a broad proletarian front composed of the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the mass of the trade unions. This labor front will fight every move of reaction. Around this proletarian, working-class front, a wider people's front can be developed into an effective movement against fascism and war. Hathaway denied that in the People's Front the working class loses its independence of action; on the contrary, he said, in the People's Front the trade unions are the principal base and the guarantee that the interests of the working class will be advanced. It fights to maintain civil liberties and draws the mass of the people into this fight.

One of the greatest obstacles in the struggle against fascism, Hathaway emphasized, is "the passivity of the Socialist Party," its failure to realize the imperative need for the united front, its aloofness from the movement for a Farmer-Labor Party:

> To the Socialist comrades here we say: we will continue to work for the united front with you. That united front is necessary for furthering the whole movement for a Farmer-Labor Party and for the fight against reaction.

If the Socialist Party persists in its policy of aloof purity, Hathaway pointed out, it will die. The Communists, on the other hand, were willing to cooperate for a Farmer-Labor Party this year even with those workers who suffer from the illusion that Roosevelt is a barrier to fascism. We cannot merely say to these workers, he explained, that they are making a great mistake which they will live to regret and that we will do nothing except stand by and watch them make it. We want rather to counteract their mistake by joining with them in the nationwide formation of state and local Farmer-Labor Parties.

THE Cleveland convention's chief importance is that it marked a sharp differentiation in the Social-Democratic movement of the United States. The Socialist Party split on questions of fundamental principle and of tactics. Among the most salient of these were the questions of the united front and the Farmer-Labor Party. Both problems require for their fruitful solution a precise appreciation of the danger of fascism in this country.

So far, the Militants within the Socialist Party have rejected a formal united front with the Communists. But they have entered into joint May Day parades, the defense of Angelo Herndon and other united-front activities. If such actions continue, a formal united-front agreement may come later. Such signed pacts between the Socialists and Communists in France, Italy and Austria did not come at once or easily; they came out of experience in informal, partial joint actions; and they may well come in America the same way. The Socialist Party did not go forward on the question of the United Front, but it did not go backward and probably this is considered an encouraging sign by the Communists who continue their efforts unabated in that direction. Similarly, despite its present passivity on the Farmer-Labor Party, the Cleveland resolution was a distinct advance in concept; for the resolution describes the Farmer-Labor Party in terms of a People's Front which would include not only workers and farmers, but also middle-class functional groups. That idea was clearly expressed in the fraternal greetings which Tom Mooney sent to the Cleveland convention. *"Surely* [Mooney urged] *the bitter mistakes of our German and Italian comrades will be avoided and the splendid example set by our comrades in France and Spain be a beacon light to guide your course."*

The delegates at the convention enthusiastically applauded this splendid advice; they now have an opportunity of acting upon it.

Cane Knives

WALKER WINSLOW

Two lumps in the tea
Or a cupful in the cake. . . .
Cloy to the taste for a second
And are energy for an hour.
But the swish of cane knives
Cuts no second's swathe in the mind;
Nor sends the imagination back
To the straws through which greed sucked
This sweetness out of earth.
Only the minds of the young were rich enough
To send their imaginings down,
Through labor, into this sweet's roots.
And young eyes grow duller
With each lump you drop. . . .

Lead for young eyes,
Gold for the greedy,
And a sweet for you. . . .
That's the rhythm the cane knives swing,
And that's the rhythm you never hear
Where spoons stir blood into the tea.

HUUALA, HAWAII.

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Roosevelt's Record

A. B. MAGIL

THE DAY after Franklin D. Roosevelt is returned to the White House —and his return seems at this writing preponderantly likely—he ought to dictate at least three letters of heartfelt appreciation. One should go to Al Smith, another to the American Liberty League and a third to William Randolph Hearst. And if he is in a particularly mellow mood, he might add a fourth, fifth and sixth to Herbert Hoover, the Supreme Court, and to whoever happens to be the Republican sacrifice on the altar of liberty and a balanced budget.

Only a few months ago the reelection of Roosevelt was a nebulous question-mark. Too many people had swallowed the New Deal whole and found they had swallowed wind instead of meat. The November elections showed that the Republican hullabaloo about taxation and a balanced budget (by which they mean cut down relief) was beginning to make a dent among sections of the middle class and the farmers. And then the cannonading started on the Right. With Al Smith unloosing the rebel yell and leading the charge like Pickett at Gettysburg, the Republican-Liberty League-Hearst brigade stormed the battlements of the New Deal. By the time the firing had subsided, they had nearly succeeded in shelling Franklin D. Roosevelt back into the White House.

The gentlemen of the Right were, however, not always enemies of the New Deal. Though Roosevelt may now taunt them as representatives of "autocracy" and "entrenched greed," they are the very people who put him in power and who have waxed fat on the New Deal.

Turn back the newsreel less than three years: two hundred and fifty thousand persons marched in New York's N.R.A. parade. Millions from coast to coast celebrated the birth of the Blue Eagle as the dawn of a new day. The Great Crusade was on. Under the big tent General Hugh Johnson billysundayed the gospel of the New Deal, whooped, roared, snorted and cracked down, exhorting the sinners to hit the sawdust trail.

King Ballyhoo ruled the roost, and the presses of the country ground out a deafening din. "The Roosevelt Revolution," Norman Thomas called it. And so did a lot of other well-meaning Socialists, liberals and A.F. of L. officials. The Milwaukee Leader ran a cartoon showing Moses, alias Franklin Delano Roosevelt, fair of brow and noble of mien, leading the Children of Israel, alias the American people, out of the Hoover wilderness toward the promised land of the New Deal.

Only the Communists held fast to reality. Unswamped by ballyhoo, they insisted on telling who were getting the aces and who the joker in the New Deal deck.

The full story of that very Blue Eagle fantasy still remains to be written. It will take its place among the great frauds of history, beside which the Mississippi Bubble will seem only a fly-speck. One can say this without indulging in fruitless speculation on the sincerity or insincerity of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Any man who starts from the premise that the welfare of the masses of the people is identified with and dependent on the welfare of the capitalist few who sit at the controls of power must, by one path or another, reach its inevitable conclusions. It is capitalism that is the first and the ultimate fraud.

To Mauritz A. Hallgren, formerly an editor of The Nation, now on the staff of The Baltimore Sun, goes the credit of having written the first book[1] on the gay Prospero of the New Deal which really casts some light on the forces that made and unmade that once-enchanted realm.

The Gay Reformer is a sober and sobering book. It gazes upon the not always pleasant truth with a steady and searching

"Nice Doggie! You wouldn't bite the hand that feeds you, would you?" *Scott Johnston*

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eye. Its strength lies not alone in its facts and careful documentation; that by itself might lead from one blind-alley to another. What gives it blood and substance and clear vision is its historic focus.

The Gay Reformer is not a formal biography, but rather a political evaluation of President Roosevelt and the spectacular program by which he sought to exorcise the capitalist crisis and persuade the proletarian lamb to lie down with the capitalist lion in (presumably) brotherly love.

Out of it emerge two Franklin D. Roosevelts: one, the man of great personal charm, moral earnestness and inexhaustible self-confidence, in whom a patrician paternalism is buttressed by a strong sense of *noblesse oblige*. The other is the clever opportunist politician, who has no fixed principles, trims his sails to the wind and whose guiding star is "profits before plenty." Hallgren, it seems to me, tends at times to create a dichotomy between the two, whereas in actual life they blend into one. Thus he writes:

"He [Roosevelt] has not been without purpose. What he has been trying to do—subjectively and, perhaps, subconsciously—is to recreate in the modern and complex industrial society which is America the pleasant human relationships that exist in the manorial community of Hyde Park, or that may once have existed in the agrarian community of Jefferson's time. He has wanted to make men moral, to teach them to be honest in their dealings with their fellows and fair in their treatment of their inferiors."

This is a bit on the other side of fantasy, and Hallgren's book proves it. The entire career of Franklin D. Roosevelt reveals him as one of the shrewdest, politically most agile representatives of the ruling class that any country has produced in recent years. The adroit sophistication of a Roosevelt is of Wall Street and Washington, not of Hyde Park. And it belongs to the age of Morgan and Mellon; it is hardly Jeffersonian.

This is not to say that a man's personal qualities have no effect on the course of history. Herbert Hoover might very conceivably have bungled the New Deal from the start. Its special type of high-pressure demagogy required the Roosevelt temperament. But Hallgren has himself abundantly shown that far from attempting "to recreate in the modern and complex industrial society which is America the pleasant human relationships that exist in the manorial community of Hyde Park," Roosevelt has advocated as President policies which as Governor he had opposed. In carrying out these policies he has, in his relations with labor, resorted time and again to the most shameless and cynical duplicity; and the policies themselves, as expressed in the N.R.A. and A.A.A., originated not with Roosevelt, but with the dominant capitalist groups who had already begun to shape them during the Republican administrations that preceded the New Deal. By the end of the Hoover regime the various elements that made up the N.R.A. had ripened into a complete program projected by the Chamber of Commerce and other Big Business groups.

There is a cumulative irony in Hallgren's calm marshaling of the facts regarding the N.R.A., the A.A.A., the banking and stock-exchange reforms and the other pillars of the New Deal temple. From the mass of evidence he concludes that out of the N.R.A. investment Big Business received dividends in the form of greatly increased profits and the strengthening of monopoly, while the workers, who had been promised "the wages of decent living," had to content themselves with the promise. As for Labor's Magna Carta, the famous Section 7a—lifted from the Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932—it boomeranged in the form of company unions, strikebreaking labor boards and Weirton, Jennings and Houde cases.

Particularly devastating is Hallgren's examination of the fraudulent and preposterous Social Security Law and the subsistence homesteads scheme. In a chapter ironically titled: "A Kiss for Cinderella," he makes a detailed analysis of both these sections of the New Deal's "liberal" facade. He concludes that Roosevelt "is at least willing to let the superfluous workers and farmers secure themselves against want—at their own expense. He has said, in effect, that Cinderella must remain content with her station in life. But he is willing to give Cinderella a well-deserved kiss—if she'll pay for it."

The problems of capitalism, however, cannot be viewed, as Hallgren tends to view them, in terms of the automatic operation of objective economic forces, omitting the subjective factor, the activity of the masses (which is also part of the objective world). This is especially apparent in the two chapters dealing with the Roosevelt farm program. There the author gives an admirable exposition of the Hooverian origins of that program and of its glaring contradictions. But he leaves out of the picture one small item: the farmers, who are most directly affected by that program. He gives no indication that it was chiefly the wealthy farmers and a section of the middle farmers who benefited from the A.A.A., and that some 200,000 sharecroppers were driven off the land. Not only does he fail to point out these class distinctions, but he even falls into the error of echoing Roosevelt's opponents on the Right with the criticism that the A.A.A. penalized "the more efficient" farmers in order "to protect the less efficient."

When the New Deal was launched, it had the support of the decisive sections of monopoly capital. (Even Morgan, you'll remember, publicly endorsed our going off the gold standard.) Significantly, William Randolph Hearst and Huey Long are generally credited with having played a leading role in securing the nomination for Franklin D. Roosevelt at the Democratic convention in 1932. Capitalist reaction in 1933 was concentrated behind the New Deal and sought to gain its ends primarily through the policies of the administration. The Communist Party was therefore entirely correct when it pointed out at that time that the New Deal, despite liberal trimmings, marked a step toward fascism.

Today that situation has materially changed. Roosevelt no longer has the support of the decisive sections of Wall Street finance-capital. The Morgan-du Pont interests and to an increasing extent the Rockefeller oligarchy as well, having been restored to what they imagine is health, want to discard the New Deal crutches entirely in order the better to trample on the liberties of the people. They call for immediate balancing of the budget through the cessation of all federal relief; they strenuously object even to the mildest increase in taxation of the big corporations; they demand a free hand in dealing with labor, and back sedition and alien bills designed to smash labor unions and suppress civil liberties.

These are the main enemies today, the fascist-minded Liberty Leaguers and Hearsts, with their retinue of bought and paid for Thomas Nixon Carvers, and their satellite anti-labor, anti-semitic and anti-Negro organizations kept alive under the oxygen tent of du Pont cash. These are the chief inspirers, organizers and financial backers of rising American fascism.

This is not to say that Wall Street is united against Roosevelt. By no means. He still has behind him important big capitalist groups. Even within the House of Morgan there is New Deal support: in a recent speech before the Academy of Political Science, Russell Leffingwell, senior Morgan partner, vigorously defended the policies of the administration.

But Roosevelt today, despite the fact that he is actually more to the Right than he was two years ago, can no longer be regarded as the direct agent of the reaction, which has moved still farther to the Right. His is the role of strengthening reaction by constantly feeding it concessions. He attacks with words, but retreats with deeds. Witness the steady whittling down of relief and the W.P.A.'s ghastly caricature of "the wages of decent living." And in the field of war preparations Roosevelt wins the encomiums even of Hearst.

It is the dialectics of this new relation between Roosevelt and rising American fascism that is missing in *The Gay Reformer*. Hallgren seems to view the Supreme Court not as the bulwark of Republican-Liberty League-Hearst reaction, but as a check to the "fascist" tendencies of the New Deal. On the other hand, the activities of the real reactionaries are almost completely ignored. The Hearst press gets only casual mention, in a single sentence and a footnote, while the American Liberty League doesn't even break in once!

[1] *The Gay Reformer:* Profits Before Plenty Under Franklin D. Roosevelt, by Mauritz A. Hallgren. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.75.

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There is, moreover, a positive alternative to the follies and disasters of the New Deal. The American masses are in motion, and out of this ferment a new alignment of forces is emerging that is destined to play as momentous a role in the struggle against advancing fascism as did the birth of the Republican Party in the battle against the slavocracy. This new political alignment is the movement for a Farmer-Labor Party which alone offers hope of checking and defeating reaction.

It must be said for the Roosevelt administration that it is maneuvering very skilfully in this situation and, with the help of the Republican - Liberty League stupidities, has managed to convert part of the developing anti-fascist sentiment into New Deal capital. In his message at the opening of Congress and in his Jackson Day dinner speech Roosevelt made direct bids for progressive and Farmer-Labor support, setting himself up as leader of a united front against reaction. And it is significant that today the New Deal propaganda no longer centers on what it will give to the masses, but has shifted the stress to what it will save them from.

In the past few months Roosevelt has also greatly strengthened his position by taking into camp certain prominent labor officials who, because of their leadership of the progressive movement for industrial unionism, are also influential among those workers who are moving in the direction of independent political action. Thus Roosevelt's mass base, which a year ago had been seriously undermined, is once more being reconstructed to include even a considerable number of those who have been disillusioned in his policies, but are frightened at the specter of Republican triumph. Undoubtedly most of the latter group support Roosevelt provisionally and are ready to join in a real movement for a Farmer-Labor Party.

In this situation the surprising and hopeful thing is that the Farmer-Labor Party movement, far from being checked by the new Roosevelt boom, has shown such strength and gone steadily forward. Local and state parties, with strong trade-union support, are developing in many parts of the country, and the conference of representatives of labor, farm and progressive groups, held in Chicago May 30-31 under the sponsorship of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party, has taken steps looking forward toward national action this year.

For the fact remains that despite Roosevelt's bold words and his disingenuous gayety, the salvation offered by the New Deal is no more substantial than its original promise. The blank check support of large sections of organized labor can only have the effect of speeding up his movement to the Right by relieving him of part of the pressure from the Left. And in the end we may see this paradox: the greater the New Deal's victory in November, the nearer will be the hour of its ultimate defeat, when it, together with the liberties of the people, will go down before the rearing hooves of the beast of fascism. Unless—

The workers, farmers, intellectuals, small business and professional people act quickly to create that powerful Farmer-Labor Party —a real American people's front against fascism, war and capitalist aggression — which alone can prevent that fate.

It remains to be seen who will be the object of history's last laugh: Al Smith or John L. Lewis, who described Roosevelt as "the greatest humanitarian of our time." Perhaps both.

The Shostakovich "Affair"

JOSHUA KUNITZ

SOVIET art and letters are again in a state of violent perturbation. Disputes. Exposés. Declarations. Explanations. Confessions. Renunciations. Noisy public conferences are held all over the land—tumultuous, soul-searching meetings of composers, artists, poets, architects, dramatists and critics. Large masses of people are engaged in bitter controversy. Formalism versus simplicity, naturalism versus socialist realism, folk quality in art (*narodnost'*) versus the refinements and sophistication of a Proust and a Joyce.

There is it seems at present in the Soviet Union almost as much to-do about the various conflicting art tendencies as there is about the Stakhanov movement, Japanese aggressions in the East, or the famous Franco-Soviet Pact. One thing is certain: the smug self-approval, the all-round amnesty and critical mellifluousness that reigned in Soviet art and letters after the dissolution, in 1932, of the proletarian artists' and writers' associations (the R.A.P.P. in literature and its analogs in the other arts) have come to a dramatic and unequivocal end.

The whole thing began on January 28, 1936, when the *Pravda* published a brief, inconspicuous, unsigned article under the head, "Noise Instead of Music." The article seemed unimportant enough. But a reading of it was sufficient to throw the average, none-too-well-informed reader into paroxysms of extreme and pained perplexity. It was a devastatingly sharp attack on Shostakovich's well-known opera, *Lady Macbeth from the Mzensk District.* The opera was being annihilated on two grounds: (1) formalistic trickery, (2) naturalistic crudeness.

"The audience," the *Pravda* wrote, "is from the first minute overwhelmed by a deliberately disorderly, chaotic stream of sounds. Fragments of melodies, suggestions of musical phrases, drown, emerge and then vanish again in the midst of clatter and screeching and howling. To follow this music is difficult; to remember it impossible. And so all through the opera. If the composer happens to come upon a simple, comprehensible melody, he immediately, as if frightened by such a misfortune, hurls himself into the depths of musical noise which in places turns into cacaphony. . . . This music is deliberately made topsy-turvy, so that there should be nothing in it reminiscent of classical opera, so that it would have nothing in common with symphonic sound or simple popular musical expression. Music's ability to inspire the masses is sacrificed in favor of petty-bourgeois formalistic attempts, pretensions at creating something original, in favor of cheap originality. . . ."

So much for Shostakovich's formalism. Even worse is his naturalism: "The music croaks, screams, pants, chokes in order most naturally to represent the love scenes. And 'love' is smeared all over the opera in a most vulgar form. The merchant's double bed occupies a central place in the production. In this bed all problems find a solution. The same crude naturalism is employed in showing death from poisoning and in the whipping which takes place practically on the stage. . . . It is all so crude, primitive, vulgar. . . ."

About a week later (February 6, 1936), another unsigned article appeared in the *Pravda,* entitled "Counterfeit Ballet." This time it was the "Lucid Stream," a Bolshoy Theater ballet representing the festivities connected with the gathering in of the harvest by a Kubàn collective farm in the North Caucasus that was under fire. No one connected with the ballet was spared.

After some introductory remarks about the usual conservatism of the ballet as an art form ("toy-like people," "doll passions") and about the present ballet's praiseworthy attempt at getting closer to Soviet themes, the *Pravda's* argument, in brief, was:

A serious subject requires a serious approach, great and conscientious labor. People intent on creating a ballet dealing with collective farm life in a specific region would have to study that region, the collective farms in that region, the people, their songs,

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their dances, their games. Collective farms are relatively new. The relations on such farms are still fresh and fluid. One should not try to take such a subject by storm, without adequate preparation and study. Nobody drives our ballet and music. If you don't know the collective farm, if you don't know the particular region, do not hurry—work. But don't turn your art into a mockery, do not vulgarize a life that is redolent of joy and creative labor. If the new subject, the new people were really near and dear to you, you would not turn your ballet into a play of dolls. All these doll-peasants, with their sugary songs, incredible costumes and impossible dances have nothing to do with our Soviet reality. They are a mockery, a travesty.

And Shostakovich's music "fits the libretto." It has nothing to do with the Kuban, nothing to do with the collective farms. It has no character. It is sound and fury signifying nothing. Indeed—charges the *Pravda*—the music in the "Lucid Stream" had been largely written for a libretto ("The Bolt") on an industrial theme. When that did not materialize the composer utilized it in the agricultural theme of the "Lucid Stream." What else does such music signify but the composer's indifference to his subject and contempt for his audience?

TO the uninitiated the whole affair at first seemed unaccountable and distressing. For three long years Soviet critics had been unanimous and loud in their praise of Shostakovich. His compositions had been produced by the best orchestras and opera companies in the Soviet Union and abroad. Even the great Toscanini, in musically cultured Europe, was giving public performances of some of Shostakovich's works. "Lady Macbeth" had been one of the operas included in the Theater Festival of 1935 and met with the acclaim of hundreds of foreign music lovers then in Moscow. For years there was no audibly dissident voice in the whole Union. And now this sudden blow.

People who were inclined to agree with most of the *Pravda's* criticism were somewhat disturbed by the sledge hammer approach to an artist. True, the first article softened the assault by emphasizing that "all this does not stem from the composer's lack of talent or his inability to express in music simple and strong feeling," but many *Pravda* readers felt that that was a rather weak way of soothing a great and sudden hurt.

The questions that naturally arose in many puzzled minds were: Why this hullabaloo about formalism and naturalism and indifference to theme at this particular moment? If they really have become major evils in Soviet art then why had there been so little mention of them during the last three years? Furthermore, why did the *Pravda* pick on Shostakovich when there were other people in music, as well as in all the other arts, who were quite as guilty as he was?

The key to the Shostakovich affair and to the campaign against formalism and naturalism, against hack work and indifference which has come in its wake can only be found if we dig a little into the history of Soviet art during the last few years. The *Pravda* articles brought to a dramatically stormy end the mood of self-approval and general critical amnesty that had characterized Soviet art since the dissolution of the RAPP and the various parallel associations in the other arts.

The storm came suddenly, but clouds had been gathering on the horizon for a long time. Faint rumblings had been heard for months. And some of those who had discerned the portents were filled with anticipatory approval. In the seething atmosphere of the third year of the second five-year plan, when every day brought new thrills and fresh surprises, the dead quiet that reigned in the arts was becoming unnatural.

This spirit of general amiability and tolerance had perhaps been normal a little over three years ago, as a reaction to the perpetual excitement caused by the campaigns and sallies which distinguished the last months of RAPP hegemony. Then everyone, it seemed, was weary of bickering over esthetic principles and ideological subtleties. Everyone was eager to retire to his studio to do some actual writing or painting or composing regardless of what the other fellow did.

Then the critics, too, began to feel that too vigorous a handling of creative problems and personalities would disturb the newly achieved harmony. They cast aside their critical scalpels or sledge hammers, as the case might be, and adopted in their stead salves and sugar-coated pills.

In that beatific atmosphere, magazine editors abandoned all esthetic and at times even political vigilance. We are all Soviet artists and writers, creators of Soviet art and letters. Magazines began to lose their individual characters: the same writers, the same artists, the same critics appearing in all of them simultaneously and indiscriminately. Good writing ran alongside of atrociously amateurish exercises—and no one said a thing. Feelings were being carefully spared, names solicitously protected. Artists like Shostakovich, Pasternak, Lebedev, who had outstanding works to their credit, particularly when they were known abroad, enjoyed absolute immunity from unfavorable comment. They belonged to the highest ranks and their reputations were inviolable. Many younger people (from 18 to 25), though they were resentful, dared not grumble against the monopolistic attitude of the ancients (from 25 up). Any mention of literary groupings, esthetic schools, or surviving class influences was being discouraged as an indelicate breach of the newly established proprieties.

Peace. Quiet. Harmony. Retired into studios and rest homes, soothed by the critics, pampered by the government, assured of an abundance unknown to the vast majority of their colleagues in other lands, some of the older and more established Soviet writers and artists had begun to grow a little soft, spoiled, and were beginning to lose vitalizing contact with their collective, with society, with Soviet reality. They were becoming too composed and self-indulgent. Such an existence was not exactly conducive to rigorous intellectual effort or heightened emotional experiences.

This trend manifested itself with especial vividness among some of the writers and artists who, owing to historical circumstances, were neither socially nor psychologically of the revolutionary vanguard and who drew their creative energies, not from the proletariat and the revolutionary sections of the peasantry, but from other more or less alien and now rapidly disappearing economic strata. Always in a state of unstable emotional equilibrium—now haltingly advancing to the revolution (when life was becoming easier), now scurrying away from it (when life was becoming harder)—harassed internally and perpetually exposed to the X-ray of proletarian criticism, these people had eagerly seized opportunity to withdraw into the privacy of sound-proof studios. Such behavior, though understandable, was ill-advised. For now that the RAPP had ceased to exist, it was these very people who could least afford to isolate themselves from the stimulating contemporary Soviet reality.

Now that collectivization was complete and the Soviet Union was making colossal strides in every phase of its economy, now that the Soviet peoples had begun to gather the first fruits of their hard labor and that the spirit of Soviet humanism and democracy was on the ascendant, now was the very time *not* to yield to the temptation of quiet and rest, but to plunge headlong into the stream of life, to go to the very bottom of it, and then to emerge with all the treasures which only those touched by the grandeur of Soviet life can capture and fix in art.

Deliberate avoidance of sustained and vital contact with reality was bound to lead to futile spinning of meaningless prettiness or to dreary recording of innerly unassimilated facts. The creative impulse of the voluntary anchorites was bound to dissipate itself in mechanical attempts to express something new when the artists, inside, had nothing new to express (formalism); in uninspired copying of details without profound creative indentification with, and vibrant artistic recreation of, the whole (naturalism); in superficiality, vulgarization, indifference and, ultimately, in shoddy work.

The absence of forceful and discerning criticism led also to the weakening of the proletarian cadres in the arts. Those who had previously achieved some sort of a reputation were now ready to rest on their laurels. The lack of criticism resulted in the disappearance of self-criticism. Instead of growing with the age, instead of perfecting their technique, instead of widening their horizons through tenacious study of past and contemporary cultures, these proletarian artists and writers, trusting in their proletarian

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background and former successes, began unconscionably to imitate themselves, thus robbing even their earlier and relatively good works of the virtues of novelty and freshness. They became masters of revolutionary cliché.

It was not difficult to dispose of cultural wares, however questionable in quality. The market was growing. Millions of new people were absorbing "culture" with an avidity unparalleled in the history of mankind. These new millions were ready to be grateful for almost anything they were proffered, as long as it bore the label "culture."

Paradoxically, in many cases the rapid enhancement of the purchasing power of the ruble and the considerable increase of the variety of goods during the last years served as an additional factor leading to deterioration of artistic output. People had been craving things for a long time; and now that things were available the pursuit after higher incomes gained powerful impetus. The artists and writers were no exception. On the contrary, being on a much higher cultural level than most Soviet citizens, they were prone to attach, at first, excessive importance to what they considered the prerequisites of a truly cultured life. Those who could afford it, hastened to acquire expensive furniture, phonographs, radios, pianos, automobiles; those who couldn't, hastened to accelerate their output, without always seeing to it that quantity should not be achieved at the expense of quality. The absence of criticism, the lack of vigilance on the part of theatrical producers, literary editors and museum directors, as well as the limitless and not too critical demand of the masses for "cultural" wares, further encouraged the drive for quantity. Hack writing became a major evil.

The deplorable situation was greatly aggravated by the rather confused and confusing conception of "artistic quality" promulgated at the last All Union Congress of Soviet writers in 1934, and subsequently adopted by many Soviet critics. We must recall that since the beginning of the second *Piatiletka* one of the major objectives of the government and the Communist Party in the Soviet Union has been higher QUALITY—from quality of service in grocery shops to quality of goods, dwellings, municipal and state government, schools, etc. All this under the slogan—Respect the consumer and elevate the consumer's taste. Speaking for the Party, Bukharin at the Writers' Congress raised the same demand for quality in the arts. But Bukharin, fundamentally a mechanist, mechanically carried over his conception of quality from industry into art. A good shoe is a well-made shoe; a good play is a well-made play. It is all a matter of craftsmanship.

It was perhaps dialectically inevitable that the earlier emphasis on ideological content would be followed by the antithetical emphasis on form. However, in the swing formward, it was overlooked that in art "quality" embraces both content and form. People spoke of socialist realism, often forgetting that socialist realism implied a special

"STAIRWAY THAT LEADS NOWHERE"

kind of quality, a socialist quality, in art. It is true that a good shoe is a good shoe, irrespective of whether it is made by a Communist in Socialist Russia or a fascist in Nazi Germany. In art it is a little different. That art is best which expresses the epoch at its noblest, its loftiest, at its most progressive. Here it is not merely a matter of craftsmanship. A convinced Nazi playwright, however skilled, cannot possibly produce a great play, for he cannot possibly express the noblest and most humane aspirations and emotions of contemporary man. Clearly, in art, quality is not a mere matter of form. By placing on the pedestal a writer like Pasternak, who, though a sincere poet and excellent craftsman, was too much in the grip of his bourgeois class ties and futurist antecedents to express the deeper content of contemporary Soviet humanity, the Writers' Congress actually placed a premium on sheer craftsmanship, sheer form. From this it was only one short step to formalism—a fatal step taken by many Soviet writers and artists who, in addition to all the other factors enumerated above, were completely disoriented by the failure clearly to define the term quality as applied to socialist art.

The main point about the Shostakovich affair is that a rapidly growing number of art lovers in all walks of life, professionals, workers, peasants, and even some of the more socially sensitive artists and writers had commenced to feel the unsatisfactory situation in the arts and the need for a serious shakeup.

The time was ripe. The Stakhanov movement demonstrated the tremendous cultural growth of the Soviet masses. It was in the light of the experiences of millions of Soviet workers and peasants that Stalin in his famous speech at the First All Union Conference of Stakhanovites pointed toward the tangible, though still feeble, beginning of the transition from Socialism to Communism and of the ultimate "elimination of the distinction between mental and manual labor." The Stakhanov movement has brought in its wake a general stock-taking of all the economic, social and cultural wealth of the Soviet peoples. It was inevitable that at a time of general inventory, the attention of the Soviet masses should also be directed to the arts.

Vsevolod Meyerhold, the famous theatrical producer, himself one of the inspirers of formalism in the theater, has said: "The articles in the *Pravda* could not have appeared before the Stakhanov upsurge. They have been called out by that people's move-

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ment, they voice the demand of the masses, the builders of socialism. The Stakhanovites have broken the old standards. In exactly the same way in the realm of art they are transcending the standards established by us artists."

The young poet Alexey Surkov declared:

"The articles in the *Pravda* are cheering proof of the increased interest in the arts manifested by the many-millioned population of our country. The people of our land, having finally tasted of the fruits of our beautiful classics, have come to us and said, 'And what have you given?' And it has turned out that we have given pitifully little, that we have given 'Lady Macbeth,' that not infrequently under the label of first-class stuff we have turned out poor imitations of bad bourgeois art. The discussion provoked by the *Pravda* articles will last more than a few days; it will last until we begin to give the reader genuine socialist art. Instead of futile general talk about quality, this discussion makes us get closer to business. It forces us to realize that our time is very patient with the weaknesses in our art, but that there is also a limit to patience. Let us not abuse this patience, and let us stop looking for the causes of our weaknesses where they are not. When Stakhanov comes to the Kremlin, he says: 'I have produced in my shaft more coal than has ever been produced before.' And what can we say? That we are still adjusting ourselves! That we are still in the midst of swinging out, but that we cannot bring the blow down. Who will be interested in that? Art always marched in the first rank of society, but we are still trying to catch up, still wondering how to liquidate our backwardness. And we have no reason to take offense if we are told: 'Step up to the front, or you will be too late.'"

In view of the general prevalence of the problem, why did the *Pravda* pick on Shostakovich for the first blow when there were other people in the arts who were quite as guilty as he was? I put the question to a member of the *Pravda* staff, and the reply was: "We had to begin with somebody. Shostakovich was the most famous, and a blow against him would create immediate repercussions and would make his imitators in music and elsewhere sit up and take notice. Furthermore, Shostakovich is a real artist, there is the touch of genius about him. A man like that is worth fighting for, is worth saving. The trouble was he had his eye too much to his admirers in the West, as well as the little clique of Bohemian petty-bourgeois admirers right here. Their applause meant more to him than the applause of millions. He was on the wrong path, and it was bound to lead him to creative sterility, to frustration. We had faith in his essential wholesomeness. We knew that he could stand the shock. We knew that a severe blow, instead of crushing him, would make him think, look around, and realize that greatness lay not in trickery, sophistication, crudeness, clownishness, and contempt for the vast and growing Soviet audience, but in a keen penetration into our epic Soviet life, in a poignant indentification with the heroic character of our reality and in a profoundly simple—simple in the sense that Beethoven is simple—art that would be in harmony with our unrepeatable epoch. Shostakovich knows and everyone else knows that there is no malice in our attack. He knows that there is no desire to destroy him. In fact, shortly after our attack, he has been given a commission to write another opera. And who can tell but that when he completes that opera, he will be given the Order of Lenin, the highest honor of the land. Everything is possible in this land of ours!"

Spain's Enemies

ILYA EHRENBOURG

THE Spanish bourgeoisie is lazy, greedy and illiterate. It buys British-made goods, babbles in French and despises its own people.

Spain has fertile fields, rich pastures, olive trees, orange groves, the vineyards of Jerez and Malaga, truck gardens, the rice fields of Valencia, coal, copper, iron-ore, lead, as well as skilled mechanics, competent gardeners and excellent workers. It is a rich country reduced to poverty. The people are ragged and hungry and feed on acorns. There are 800,000 unemployed and not one receives relief. Only the solidarity of the working class saves them from a death by hunger—the poor share their last piece of bread with their comrades.

Most of the country's wealth, including the railroads, telephones and tobacco monopoly, is owned by foreigners. First the kings, then the Lerrouxes, turned the country into a colony. The French "railroad barons," the Rothschilds, hold the Spanish railroads tight in their claws. The result is chaotic train schedules, broken, filthy cars and high railroad tariffs. It is cheaper to ship oranges from Valencia to England and thence to Santander than direct from Valencia to Santander. The railroads run up a deficit of millions each year. The deficit is covered by the Spanish government. The French also own the iron of Biscay and the coal of Asturias. Is there any wonder that the Right French press speaks with such hatred about the "crimes of the Spanish People's Front"? The English own the copper and lead; the Americans the telephones.

Thus the Spanish "patriots" have sold out their country.

The basis of the country's wealth is its olive tree industry, which belongs to the Italians. The olive oil is shipped to Italy and thence exported. The price of olives has fallen drastically; Andalusian peasants pay for the feats of the Black Shirts in Ethiopia.

The right-wing newspapers have been, of late, carrying advertisements: "A beautiful villa is being sold in Biarritz." Or: "A large house is up for sale in Luzanne." In spite of its light-mindedness, the Spanish bourgeoisie is now beginning to think about the future. The richest of the country have already transferred their capital to other countries. Every day frontier guards arrest smugglers who carry abroad their "last pennies"—hundreds of thousands of pesetas.

Senor Riveralta is one of the biggest industrial magnates of Spain. He owns the factories of the company Uralit and the two moderately-liberal newspapers, *El Sol* and *La Voz*. Riveralta reminds one of the Russian magnates of the last century, the Riabushinskis and Morozovs—free thinkers and collectors of French paintings. In his youth he wrote poetry. Now he lives in a palace. All he has to do is push a button and his tropical garden is lit with hundreds of multicolored lamps. During our conversation, he told me that he never "quarrels" with his workers.

"Once," he said, "there was a strike in my factory. The workers were absolutely right. But I did not give in at once. I did not want them to experience a sense of victory."

This liberal capitalist complained that his colleagues were supporting fascism:

"We shall perhaps have another government run by Gil Robles, but after that the Communist revolution is inevitable. Of course, even now the possibility of a dictatorship of the proletariat is not excluded. It is high time to realize that Azana's government is the last stand of the Spanish bourgeoisie."

Not all capitalists push buttons or write poems. Nor do they base their hopes upon Azana; they look to fascism. In the fashionable restaurants, in the clubs, in the parlor cars, one can hear conversations and remarks that we Russians heard in the summer of 1917:

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"The workers are not so badly off. They are being incited by their leaders. The people have become unruly . . .

"They say that they are unemployed. The truth is that they are simply lazy.

"An unheard of thing happened to us: Our servants went out on strike! Now there is only one hope: other countries should intervene and prevent the rise of Communism in Spain. . . ."

Intervention! The more desperate ones (or the more cowardly) are already whispering this word. The monarchist newspaper *ABC* writes:

> Chancellor Hitler has announced to the world a new truth: there are no longer any vassals among the European nations. But our country has ceased to be a land of freedom and honor such as Italy and Germany. Spain is now a land of slaves. Europe cannot look on complacently while the Bolsheviks are going ahead completing the revolution that commenced in 1931. Europe will intervene as it has intervened in Russia and as she will intervene in Soviet affairs again. Europe cannot exist alongside of Bolshevism.

In spite of the censorship, there is no doubt about the meaning of these words. What deliverer does the Spanish bourgeoisie hope for? Herr Hitler? The black shirts from the land of "freedom and honor"? Perhaps the ragged gendarmes of the little Portuguese dictator, Salazar?

The shrewder ones among the Spanish bourgeoisie realize that Europe has her own troubles and that the preservation of Spanish castles could hardly interest her at the moment. Rather than Hitler from Berlin they prefer guns in their own hands. Gil Robles' government distributed 250,000 permits for guns. Not only are the monarchists armed but also the Carlists, the members of *Falange* and the followers of *La Ceda*. In the Cortes, the leader of the fascists, Calvo Sotelo, denounces Marxism and urges the people of Spain to establish a corporative state. The newspaper *ABC* collects money to "help the workers who have suffered at the hands of the Marxists"; strikebreakers of the fascist unions and the bums from the "Chinese Quarter" of Barcelona. The newspaper modestly announces that these "great heroes" still have "great deeds to perform."

The list of the donors speaks for itself:

An admirer of Hitler	1 peseta
For God and Spain	10 pesetas
Wake up, Spain!	5 pesetas
A National-Syndicalist	10 pesetas
A follower of Falange	5 pesetas
A follower of Robles	10 pesetas
A monarchist	2 pesetas

And so on. Altogether the newspaper collected 3,000 pesetas (about $980). This money is, of course, for minor "deeds." Money for bombs, attacks upon homes of left-wing leaders, for major enterprises such as shooting upon members of the government, is collected in a much more prosaic manner—without slogans or receipts. The bankers still have some pesetas left which they have not yet smuggled out of the country.

The Dominican monk, Father Gafo, issues special appeals to the pious to donate money in order to help out "the heroes who will not allow our country to become a second edition of Soviet Russia."

Encouraged by prayers and pesetas, the fascists work against time. On the fences of Navarra one can read the inscription: "Long live God! Death to Azana!"

In Cordova the fascists kill the young Socialist Lafuente Garcia. In Madrid the followers of *Falange* murder the aged judge Pedrelaga. In Escalon they attack a collective farm: four are killed. A young fascist throws a bomb into the home of Ortega y Gasset. The priest of the village of Arganda, in spite of his clerical garb, hurls a bomb into the People's Center. The church is a huge arsenal; the members of the church are organized into a "Christian Order" whose function is to murder secretaries of the Cortes. In Nomaroza forty-five kulaks, upon receipt of a telegram from Madrid, take rifles in their hands and shout: "It has begun!"

The police play around with the fascists as a cat with a mouse. On March 28 they closed the Fascist Youth House of Pampelon. On April 10 they opened it; on April 27 they closed it again. What did the young fascists do in the House between the 10th and 21st? On March 30 the police of Oviedo arrested 52 fascists. They were freed on April 9 and rearrested on the 20th.

On April 16 the Civil Guards revolted against the government. The Cortes was on that day guarded by the so-called Storm Guards. The gendarmes, too, fight among themselves, and the newspapers refer to the "republican sentiments" of the Storm Guards. I doubt very much the sentiments of the Storm Guards. Until the government arms the workers' militia, its safety will be in the hands of its avowed enemies.

In addition to the hired killers, the machine guns of the Civil Guards and European intervention, the fascists place much hope in the confusion that is created within the ranks of the workers by the Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederation of Labor. For anyone who does not know present-day Spain, it would be hard to believe that Bakunin's aphorisms are still utilized as contemporary slogans.

Spain is a country that has climbed up the ladder of progress, having skipped many steps. Thus, the new world often exists there alongside the middle ages. Some of her intellectuals remind one of heroes from the pages of Chekhov. The newspapers print long and learned articles about Leonid Andreyev whom they regard as an "innovator." The well-known novelist, Pio Baroja, once told me that the triumph of "regionalism" —Communism in one province, fascism in another, etc.—will save Spain. He also told me that Azef and Rasputin were the most interesting characters in the Russian Revolution.

The Anarchist leaders of the Confederation of Labor are similar anachronisms. The strike committee of the Barcelona Anarchists resembles a gathering of Russian Nihilists of the 70's: long hair, an abundance of dark glasses (for "conspirative" purposes) and a studied disorder in the room. I had a long talk with the editor of the Anarcho-Syndicalist newspaper *Solidaridad Obrera*. His name is Callejas.

"Only the Communists and Socialists," he said, "have leaders. . . ."

"And the Anarchists?"

"We have no leaders. We have guides. Hitler's Germany and the U.S.S.R. are dictatorships."

"You don't see any difference between these two countries?"

"No."

"Would you speak to me if I were a Nazi writer?"

"Of course not."

"In other words, you do see a difference between these two dictatorships?"

Callejas thought for a while and replied: "Yes. There is a difference. The German dictatorship is that of the bourgeoisie; in Russia it is a people's dictatorship."

He also elaborated a great deal upon methods he would apply in organizing the "new society." There will be no jails in his anarchist society. What about his enemies? He will try to convince them. Those who will not be convinced, he will shoot. He will have partisans—guerilla fighters—instead of an army. Who will lead them? Sergeants.

He told me all that without smiling even once. He meant it seriously.

The hangout of the Anarchist leaders is a café which, ironically enough, is called "Tranquillity." In this café they debate the organization of the all-Iberian Anarchy. The youth doesn't follow them any more. Time, at last, has brought about the necessary corrective. Today it is gray hair which is the distinguishing mark of Bakunin's followers.

The leaders of the Confederation are honest men personally. There are, however, quite a number of *agents provocateurs* among them. These people work now hand in hand with the fascists. For the fascists, too, are "against capital"; they are for the corporative state. Soon they, too, will be quoting Bakunin. Recently, the police arrested a certain Anarchist, Marcelo Duruti, who was planning in league with the fascists quite an underhanded affair. The class instinct guards the workers against these *provocateurs*.

In Sama there were many Anarcho-Syndicalists. In 1934, together with the Communists and Socialists, they proclaimed the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The struggle of the Spanish workers is only beginning. I shall never forget the farmhand in the village of Quesmondo who said to me:

"Why don't they give us rifles? In 1931 the toilers of Spain learned what a republic is. In 1934 they realized what it means to have arms."

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Why Is Portes Gil in New York?

ARNOLD REID

WHEN a prominent Mexican ex-president visits New York under such circumstances that you have to track him down for two days before talking with him, something may be up. Especially since Portes Gil is no mere ex-president today, but chairman of the National Revolutionary Party, the governing party of Mexico. By the time I located him at his hotel, breakfasting with his wife, I had already known that he had been rushing about town seeing important people. Once I had caught a glimpse of him wearing smoked glasses, in the company of Castillo Najera, Mexican ambassador to Washington. Indeed, something was up, but what?

"I am simply here for a rest," Portes Gil assured me, his striking Indian features impassive. Now, I have considerable respect for the ex-president's judgment, and it would take pretty poor judgment to induce a man, especially a Mexican, to leave the beautiful and serene air of the Distrito Federal for a "rest" in the dust and hubbub of midtown New York. Only some important political consideration might drive him to migrate in the wrong direction at this time of year; and recent news from Mexico indicates that the "rest" which Portes Gil is seeking here has political significance.

Portes Gil's face is strong, dark, reserved; but his eyes gleam with shrewdness. He answered my questions cautiously, cleverly, evasively; with perfect ease he was capable of conveying an attitude which was the precise opposite of his real one.

Calles, Portes Gil assured me, has constituted himself an enemy of the present Mexican government, which has been acting within the scope of the law. The situation of our workers is visibly improving. The Cardenas government sees to it that living standards grow better.

Having heard that Portes Gil is a great admirer of Mussolini (whom he slightly resembles in appearance), I asked: "Do you think that some of the principles of government now applied in European countries, notably Italy, are applicable to Mexico?"

"We have a democratic government based on the division of powers. Our Six Year Plan recognized the government's right to intervene in national economy. Frankly, the state tends to be the director of national economy—although it leaves the productive forces, employers and workers alike, free to organize without state intervention."

All this sounded as if Portes Gil was definitely against all that Calles stood for and completely at one with President Cardenas. Actually, there is a conflict within the National Revolutionary Party in which Portes Gil heads a conservative wing.

Two weeks before his arrival in New York, Portes Gil defeated a move by left-wing Congressional leaders to oust him from the leadership of the National Revolutionary Party. The Left Senators and Deputies, who have been the most loyal supporters of President Cardenas' progressive policies, objected specifically to a series of decisions made by Portes Gil during the recent state plebiscites of the National Revolutionary Party, where disputes had existed as to the outcome of the plebiscites, which in Mexico are tantamount to gubernatorial elections. Portes Gil in most cases awarded the victory to reactionary candidates as against popular candidates who were closer in spirit to the Cardenas administration. In the state of Puebla he supported the militarist general Aviles Camacho, notorious representative of feudal landlordism and patron of the fascist "goldshirts." Portes Gil ordered *El Nacional,* official organ of the National Revolutionary Party, and supposedly the government organ as well, to print a special edition attacking Aviles Camacho's progressive opponent. He arbitrarily removed the editor of the newspaper, an ardent Cardenista, when the latter refused to print this edition.

Having seized the upper hand in party politics, Portes Gil's Right faction immediately made itself felt in the government's policy toward the nationwide strike of railroad workers. In violation of Mexican arbitration laws, a tribunal declared the strike illegal, without even hearing the arguments of trade-union representatives. Four hours before the strike began, *El Nacional,* under its new Portes Gil editor, ran off copies of the anti-strike decision of the Labor Tribunal.

The decision was clearly a case of yielding before the pressure of United States financiers who control the policies of the National Railways of Mexico by virtue of its bonded indebtedness to them and through the ownership of a large portion of its stock. The pressure was transmitted to the governing group in Mexico mainly through Portes Gil.

President Cardenas himself yielded to this pressure. The trade-union movement condemned the government's stand in the sharpest terms, and a move is under way at present for another walkout to be seconded by a general strike affecting all industries.

The Cardenas government is in a critical stage. The policies of the Portes Gil faction are unmistakably those of capitulation to imperialism. His record in this respect is unmistakable. Mexicans refer to Portes Gil's administration of 1928-30: "When Dwight Morrow was president of Mexico during the tenure of Portes Gil." His record includes breaking off relations with the Soviet Union, destruction of trade-union organizations and outlawing the Communist Party. He gave the status of first-class citizenship to the National City Bank and the Electric Bond and Share Co. Portes Gil was president when Julio Antonio Mella, Cuban anti-imperialist hero, was assassinated with the aid of Mexican police officials.

The strength of the Cardenas government among the people of Mexico as well as the sympathy that it enjoys among progressives in this country, are based on its assertion of Mexico's right to be an independent nation and its enlightened stand toward the demands of workers and peasants for better living standards. Because it was backed by the laboring masses of Mexico, the Cardenas government has been able to carry on a successful fight against Calles, arch representative of national betrayal. Now, with Calles in exile, Portes Gil may become within governing circles the vehicle for policies analogous to those of Calles.

It is by no means unlikely that Portes Gil will utilize his stay in New York to come to an understanding with influential groups in this country which have until recently relied upon Calles for the promotion of their predatory interests in Mexico. Portes Gil is aware of the tremendous popular sympathy which Cardenas enjoys. "The Cardenas government," he told me, "is the strongest government in Mexico's history because it enjoys the full support of public opinion." It is therefore not likely that he will outwardly oppose the president at this time. The emphasis of his activity seems rather to be placed on bringing pressure to bear on Cardenas to divert his policies to the Right.

This conflict of forces has by no means found solution. There is a very hopeful movement on foot to crystallize all Left forces which exist within the National Revolutionary Party and to establish party unity on the basis of the progressive course of action upon which the Cardenas government originally embarked. The outcome of the present crisis in Mexican politics will depend upon the success of these efforts for unity on the Left and above all on the ability of the working-class and peasant organizations to exercise mass pressure in favor of a continued leftward, anti-imperialist march by the Cardenas government.

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The American Newspaper Guild Convention as seen by William Gropper

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Our Readers' Forum

"This Way, Lawyer!"

In my article, "This Way—Lawyer!" I described the plight of average lawyers and suggested a means of guaranteeing them a minimum income of $50 per week, at the same time assuring the equally underprivileged public of much-needed legal services. Correspondents pro and con raise a number of "issues." Before replying, I repeat that my plan was not offered as definitive; "the final plan . . . can evolve only from considered discussion by the rank-and-file bar."

Law and the Status Quo

Yale Law Student attributes to me counselling against having lawyers brought under control of the A.B.A. by means of a national House of Delegates. Thus, he warns of the greater danger of bringing them under State control. He sees law as functioning to preserve the status quo and doubts that any program for lawyers "can be drafted short of one for the reconstruction of the state itself."

My friend is mistaken; I do not regard integration of the nation's lawyers as undesirable from any point of view. I stress the need of using this unity for all lawyers. I criticized the A.B.A. and local bar associations because they lacked a social point of view, democratic control, and "realistic considerations of the actual problems and wants of the average lawyer." I did this to show the danger in allowing reactionaries to control the movement and to point the way of correct action by the lawyers.

Every mass movement is in danger of coming under the wrong control, but shall we abandon collective effort because of this fact? It would be sheer madness to ignore the sentiment of lawyers and not use existing bar associations to improve the conditions of the rank-and-file bar. As to state control, I did not advocate that. I did ask that the state recognize and assume its social responsibility towards lawyers as a section of the population.

Are law and status quo one? Law changes as men change, and men *do* change (as witness Soviet Russia, for example). There is great economic unrest in this country with strikes, lockouts, picketing, curtailment of civil rights, etc., etc. Plenty for lawyers to do to safeguard the rights of the people. They must insist on their right to defend the people and be paid for it.

"Why Worry About Them"

Morris Gisnet credits me with naiveté in thinking that the so-called leaders of the bar are interested in improving the conditions of lawyers. Did I not expose these "leaders" and the shortcomings of the bar associations under their control? And did I not suggest ways whereby the rank-and-file could most effectively proceed through joint action? Let me assure Morris Gisnet when he states that I "dare not suggest the desirability" of joining hands with all others against reaction that I do so suggest. After all, my article was about lawyers and therefore restricted. The same things implicit in all struggles are implicit in theirs.

S. R. Wein, Morris Gisnet, Yale Law Student and others ask expressly or by implication why anything should be done for lawyers. They say lawyers are the agents of reaction, and ask what lawyers can offer "in the way of justice," since lawyers are not engaged in any social activity. Let us understand what is meant by the "social character of the lawyer's services." In the sense that law is utilized by everyone within our civilization in our countless transactions, it is "social." We are not speaking of it in terms of "justice." Just as production of shoes is social, so is the practice of law. That lawyers have not sought for *justice per se* is true, but it is still possible within the framework of the status quo for lawyers to perform useful social functions.

Re "Free Legal Advice"

J. L. Brown who reveals himself as the anonymous author of "Don't Be a Lawyer" questions my theory of what he chooses to call the "underconsumption of legal advice." He believes you can get all the free legal advice you want. Maybe so. I think this is not quite a half-truth. It happens that many people can get free advice. The public on the whole does not know it, nor are there adequate facilities available. We do know that legal aid societies, public defenders, and labor and civil liberties defense organizations are taxed far beyond their limits.

How many are deprived of legal services and advices? Thousands upon thousands. We are still a long ways from meeting the demands of the people. Mr. Brown questions whether I have given thought to what might happen if society guaranteed economic security to lawyers. He says, "They [lawyers] might be required to cease being concerned with only winning cases, and seek only truth and justice." He sees society learning to get along without lawyers. I cannot view either of these possibilities as undesirable. The inconsistency to which Mr. Brown and the others point, namely, society eliminating that which it engenders, is as apparent to me as to them. None the less, it is incumbent upon us to strive for change if we expect to get it. In the case of lawyers, it is up to them to unite and to press for economic security. It is not as Mr. Brown thinks, that they are to be preferred above others. The same effort should be made by all other classes of the people. In the course of time these various groups will gravitate towards each other and unite in what will have become a common effort.

"Organize or Quit"

To Leon Lasaroff, Richard Littman and the others, who call for change—who want a new order—I merely ask that they do what they can now. We are coming to understand more clearly that fundamental changes are not wrought overnight. Many onslaughts—from all directions—are necessary to remove our decadent economy. To assume cynical disdain because proposals made appear inconsistent with conditions of society is indulging in defeatism. I warn them against the Utopianism which enfeebles us in our attempts to better our condition. There are a lot of things that can be done before the means of production and distribution are socialized. Shall we have a Farmer-Labor Party? By all means, if we can thus most effectively obtain our objectives. But in the meantime, let us follow the advice of H. O., who says, "We must certainly look to our immediate needs and organize the rank-and-file for existence—either that, or quit."

Make a Pamphlet?

H. E. Baker asks if it would not be possible to make a cheap reprint of the two articles for pamphlet distribution. I believe this can be done provided enough lawyers' groups would place advance orders to underwrite the cost of printing and mailing. If interested groups will write to me in care of THE NEW MASSES I shall be glad to communicate with them.

S. M. BLINKEN.

Letter from Tehachapi

I thought NEW MASSES readers would be interested in portions of a letter which was written to me by Caroline Decker on May 10 shortly after her birthday in the Women's Prison in Tehachapi and shortly before the birthday of Louise Todd. Caroline Decker and Nora Conklin were sentenced on May 18 by the State Board of Prison Terms and Paroles to five years in Tehachapi. Their "crime" was successful leadership in agricultural strikes in 1933 and 1934. They were convicted under California's vicious Criminal Syndicalism Law. Louise Todd, who was sent to the Tehachapi prison on a highly technical and discriminatory charge of perjury in connection with her activities in getting the Communist Party on the ballot in 1934, was sentenced to three years.

"Thanks for remembering the birthday. I've managed to spend a number of mine in a curious manner. The sweet sixteenth was spent in bed with, of all things, the measles, the twenty-third spent driving to Tehachapi—and the twenty-fourth—well. Phew! How the years roll down on one. Feel as though I've lived forever and learned nothing.

"Louise's birthday is Tuesday, you know, and we've revelled positively indecently in the batch she got today. One hundred and forty-eight letters and cards of greeting today. Some interesting things are revealed, too, in these things, and we can all talk about them some day soon, we hope.

"Sitting here and talking we have periodic storms of brilliant ideas. Then it's all ruined because we know so well how bewildered and uncertain we'll be when we get out of this place.

"There are some of the loveliest birds here. Have never seen such variety all at once. Louise's Ecci is the adored creature of our floor. He shows definite radical leanings. He's independent, intelligent, knows what he wants and goes for it—even if it's chewing up all the flowers, book covers and calendars! Among his bourgeois tendencies the most noticeable one is his love of an audience. Soon as the door opens he sings as though he'd conquered the world. Another tendency is—and I hate to designate which kind that one is—that he is horribly rude. He likes to sing best when we are reading to one another and then there's no use trying to compete with him—it's endless and he wins because we get hoarse and it doesn't seem to affect him at all.

"Everyone is writing us of France, Spain and May Day. You should see the grand pictures the New York papers carry of its May Day! And our Party received the second highest aggregate vote in all of France! Am interested in the 'repatriation' of the Filipinos. If you have time, drop a local line about it. Dastardly!

"Lock-up—so to read for several hours."

MIRIAM BONNER.

Los Angeles, Cal.

From a Dirt Farmer

I am a constant reader of THE NEW MASSES and have found it rather surprising that THE NEW MASSES has done so little in furthering such a great anti-war play as *Bury the Dead*. That play, I think, is one of the greatest plays that I have ever seen. I think that every honest intellectual and worker should see it to be able to better combat war, which is one of the greatest scourges of civilization. I read the play in The New Theater magazine and I am a dirt farmer from upper New York and have especially made this trip to be here in town to be able to see this play. I think that if every farmer and worker and intellectual could manage to see this play he would never want to fight in the bosses' wars again. I think that all organizations could do a great piece of work and duty to their membership if they could send all of their members to see this play. It is the greatest organizer against war that I have yet seen.

WILLIAM MCGEEHAN.

Monroe, N. Y.

[We agree entirely with Mr. McGeehan's high opinion of *Bury the Dead*, as was made clear in our extended review in THE NEW MASSES of April 31, and in our strong recommendation repeated in our issue of May 5.—THE EDITORS.]

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

The Other Europe

EUROPE UNDER THE TERROR, by John L. Spivak. Simon and Schuster. $2.50.

LET us look at Europe after the armistice. Still licking her wounds, she returned to peacetime occupations. Peasants in Galicia and Champagne set out to cultivate fields far richer in cartridges and barbed wire than in grain. Workers once more sought out their former bosses and their workshops which had been manufacturing nothing but shells for the past four years. The people lacked several million arms, legs, eyes and jaws. Beyond that, nothing was changed in the West, or at best, very little. Men who had been "too old to fight" in 1914 were still at their posts—Poincaré, Hindenberg, George V, busy dedicating monuments to the dead.

Yet the war was not over. November 11, 1918 had passed, but guns still thundered in Siberia, Silesia, Turkey, Lithuania, using up warstocks.

The crisis following the armistice seemed to have reached its end. In Germany and Austria, Social-Democratic governments presided at the pacific transformation (long live the ballot box!) of the capitalist system into the "socialist" system and, incidentally, turned machine-guns on "misguided" workers. In Italy, Mussolini had taken power, but fascism appeared to be a phenomenon purely Italian—it could not possibly menace another country.

A few years pass. Then some agricultural and backward states—Poland, Jugoslavia, Bulgaria—in the wake of the crisis which shook the continent, yielded to fascism.

In the very nature of their economic situations, this was not true fascism but rather a military dictatorship with fascist tendencies (the same was true in Spain under Primo de Rivera). Superficial observers, nevertheless, continued to preach the benefits of democracy solidly established, according to them, among the great occidental powers.

Then came the Reichstag fire, the bombardment of workers' houses in Vienna, the murder of Asturian miners by the Spanish Foreign Legion, the proliferation of the Croix de Feu in France. It could be said that Europe had been thrown backwards seven centuries, if this would not have been a calumny on the Middle Ages. And those very ones who thought democracy immortal resigned themselves in advance to the "inevitable" ascension of fascism.

After the bloody defeat of the Bavarian Soviets and the Hungarian Commune, the European working class had marked time or retreated. With the exception of several islands not yet submerged by the rising tide of fascism, the continent west of the Soviet Union was at that time nothing more than a vast concentration camp.

If there were ever historic dates that have a meaning, that of February 9, 1934, is one. In the evening of that day, at Paris, three days after the attempt of the fascist coup d'état, following the appeal of the Communist Party and despite the government order forbidding it, the workers of Paris, descendants of the sans-culottes and grandsons of the Commune, took possession of the streets. The paving-stones of Paris, old friends of revolution, moved out of their setting to form barricades under the hands of the Communists, the Independents and also of the Socialists who had come to join their brothers, despite the orders of their party. The demonstration of February 9 was the first obstacle in the path of French fascism, the gauge of approaching united action among the parties of the working class.

The United Front, amplified by the adhesion of peasant and petty-bourgeois elements, was destined to culminate in France and in Spain, in the formation of the People's Front. It showed the whole world that fascism was not inevitable and pointed out the means of avoiding it.

It goes without saying that the task of the People's Front in the countries where it exists, is far from being ended; indeed, it has only just begun. And despite Hitler, Mussolini and their less spectacular imitators—from Portugal to Finland—the Europe of 1936 is, if one may be allowed to examine the present by the light of coming events, and not of the immediate past, the Europe of the People's Front.

What I have said is a criticism of the title of the new book of John L. Spivak, rather than of the work itself. One may not reproach an author for not having discussed a topic other than the one he has chosen. But if his readers wish to have a complete idea of Europe, they must remember France and Spain while following Spivak through Italy and Germany.

A book such as this was indispensable in the United States where the newspapers have a very peculiar manner of covering the political news. Everyone who is informed on European events knows to what point the information published in most American newspapers is incomplete and often incorrect. The censorship established in fascist countries must, naturally, take part of the responsibility, as Spivak says in his preface, but even if it were not so rigorous, we could depend upon our friends Hearst, Macfadden, Knox, McCormick, etc., to take the place of a Goebbels and a Ciano. (The accounts of the French elections have been the most recent proof of this; almost all the American newspapers misreported the facts, and the editorials devoted to this subject constitute a model of conscious or unconscious ignorance.)

Thus Spivak's book will be a revelation for many readers. This man is a devil of a fellow, a sort of a movie camera equipped with the human qualities of judgment, intelligence and with a genius for showing the facts as they are. Undoubtedly, he, with Mihail, Koltsov, Egon Erwin Kisch, Ilya Ehrenbourg and Andrée Viollis, form today the finest body of reporters existing in Western countries. And I am not only speaking of revolutionary reporters (although I am persuaded that if the four writers mentioned above are all on the side of the workers, it is not by pure coincidence; the art of a reporter is measured by his themes and the revolutionary cause alone offers today, beside the key to events, an interest large enough and human enough to justify the profession of the reporter.)

Some will reproach Spivak for a certain air of romance, above all in his description of illegal revolutionary movements. Spivak notes in one chapter: "I'm not much good at this Edgar Wallace stuff." I can't help thinking that, on the contrary, he likes it and excels in it. But I don't see much harm in that. Romanticism—not that of imaginary tales, but the realist romanticism which is made up of heroism, adventure and human passion—is today the exclusive appanage of the revolutionary writers. We are the only ones who have before us a cause, men and subjects worth talking about. The life of any militant you choose, from Dimitrov down to the obscure miner of Kentucky, is worthy of a Homer. One could hardly say the same of the biography of a Cal Coolidge, for example.

John L. Spivak could have continued his description of Europe under the terror, if he had wished to do so. There are yet the Balkans, Hungary and the Baltic States. The fascists of Finland take their victims for a ride in the best gangster style. The Portuguese prisons are never empty. And the Nazis themselves could learn something of the technique of torture from the policemen of Jugoslavia.

But Spivak was right in choosing only the most representative fascist regimes and in describing not the most bloody horrors, but the daily, habitual terror which weighs on whole

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peoples, the terror and misery which are the daily lot of the workers, peasants, the petty-bourgeois and the intellectuals under the dictatorship of the Krupps, Montecatinis, Mandls and their governmental office-boys. The book of Spivak illustrates perfectly this evident truth that fascism is a source of misery in the present and of war in the immediate future.

A single remark: in his description of Germany, Spivak is perhaps too insistent upon the gangsterism of the Nazis, this gangsterism from which the capitalists, too, suffer. It is certain that fascism—which is a sign of the weakness of the regime and not of its strength—is often prejudicial to the individual interests of this or that capitalist, while permitting during a certain time—and here is its essential function—the survival of the body of capitalists, as a class. On the other hand, it would be futile to attach too much importance to the numbers of the members of illegal revolutionary parties. These militants, the best among the best, are not the mass; organizers and leaders of men, they constitute the bony structure of the ineluctable proletarian revolution. It is proper to recall that at the moment of the October Revolution, in a country whose population was almost three times and whose territory forty-four times greater than those of Germany, the Bolshevik Party only numbered 60,000 members.

The picture of Europe painted by Spivak might seem to be too dark. The truth is that the reality is so. Moreover, as I have already said, the author has not touched upon those countries where the working-class movement has taken the offensive instead of retreating.

A final caution; we forget, too often, that about one-half of the European continent is within the borders of the U.S.S.R.

JACQUES MARECHAL.

Art for Life's Sake

LUST FOR LIFE, by Irving Stone. Heritage Press. $5.00.

GOYA: A Portrait of the Artist as a Man, by Manfred Schneider. Knight. $2.75.

TWO great artists would have been surprised, shocked and not a little annoyed at the use their pictures had been put to during this past art season in New York City. Vincent van Gogh, the humble painter of the Boraines miners, the unhappy painter of the Dutch Brabant potato eaters, the vivid madman of Arles, could never have imagined in the worst of the hallucinations from which he suffered just before his end that the cream of society would ever make the approval of his work fashionable, that reproductions of his masterpieces would be used as backgrounds in the swanky shops along Fifth Avenue to show off silk stockings, diamonds and ermine wraps. He would never have believed it and he would not have liked it; these were the very people against whom he had always protested in his letters to his brother as the enemies to progress in art. But there is no longer any danger that this wild-looking painter in a workman's jacket might stumble into an exhibition to pollute the air of an opening tea, or embarrass the upper crust with his disconcerting ideas about a brotherhood of man. All his life Vincent had lived, painted and gone hungry, not only for food but for recognition and appreciation that had never come. Only his brother, a handful of fellow impressionists and an occasional simple peasant, to whom the word Art meant nothing but who was able to recognize a truth about himself when he saw it, had ever given him the faintest hope that the work of his whole life that he had struggled so hard to achieve and for which he had suffered so much was worth while.

The life and death of Vincent has become well known to American newspaper readers since the huge exhibition of his work at the Museum of Modern Art this season with its attendant publicity. Magazines have reproduced his paintings and drawings, a fictionized biography has become a best seller, color prints have found their way into homes that had never heard of any other artist than Maxfield Parrish, people everywhere have become involved in violent arguments about the pronunciation of his last name.. This Vincent would have liked, he would have liked to see that masses of people had been made aware of beauty through the medium of his art, that to scores of thousands art had become something human and alive.

Francisco Goya, on the other hand, would have been startled perhaps to find that he, the one-time First Court Painter to His Majesty the King of Spain, had appeared along with rebels from other countries in an exhibition against war and fascism at the New School for Social Research, that his etchings of the horrors of war and his satires on the ruling classes of his time had attracted more attention at his show at the Metropolitan than his paintings of the members of the court or of his many mistresses. Not that he wouldn't have been in agreement with the idea, for his powerfully etched indictments of war came at the end of an impulsive and meteoric career, when he had tasted of all the successes and honors of 18th century Spain.

Art was never a struggle for Goya. He painted as easily as he seduced his mistresses; success came early and stayed until he was tired of it and turned to emotions deeper than those displayed on the empty faces of the hangers-on at the Spanish court. Goya, as a courtier, bullfighter, swordsman, adventurer and lover, has long been a legend. The story of his love affair with the Duchess of Alba and of his painting of her in the nude is familiar to everyone who has ever heard his name. These stories are all told in *Goya, a Portrait of the Artist as a Man,* as well as numberless other stories that reveal the decadence of the Spanish rulers of his time. The whole book, however, does nothing to make one feel a new understanding of the work that he produced. The actual illustrations of Goya's work because of their bad reproduction do nothing to kindle a new appreciation.

Heritage Press has shown us how a book may be worthy of a painter's art and lead to a fonder appreciation of both the man and the artist. The limited edition of Stone's *Lust for Life* is a beautiful book, worthy of the art of Van Gogh, but it is to be regretted that it is not yet available in a less expensive form that will lose none of the richness of the color plates or black and

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white reproductions that form such an important part of its makeup. The story of the painter's life is told well and with, it seems to me, a great deal of the passion for interpreting the life that Vincent had. You pass through the pages of the book reading the story and studying the pictures with which the book is filled, with a new interest, a new regard. You read of his discovery of the plight of the miners while an unordained preacher in the Belgian coal fields, ending in disgrace when the stuffed shirts at the head of his church found him living in the same miserable hovels and smeared with the same grime as his congregation—and the drawings of this first period take on more meaning than ever before. When you have heard of the struggles with his family and the suspicious villagers of his native town who could only view success as it was interpreted into guilders and florins you have a new feeling for the pictures he created of the potato diggers and weavers, the only people who seemed to understand that a man had as much right to paint a tree as another had to plant one or cut it down. And so through to the end, each new phase brings new sympathy and new understanding. The painter's life in Paris, the struggle to use the newly discovered color of the impressionists, the plans for a Communist artists' colony, the final years in Arles where he discovered in the sunshine of the South the color which he had struggled so hard to find, only to be cut off and burned out by the hardships from which he had suffered so long.

This is a book for anyone who knows van Gogh and wants to know him better. If the success of this edition means that another and cheaper one will be forthcoming we hope that not a copy of this book is left on the shelves.

RUSSELL T. LIMBACH.

The Most Fruitful Friendship in History

FREDERICK ENGELS, by Gustav Mayer. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.50.
KARL MARX, by Franz Mehring. Covici Friede. $5.00.

THE association between Marx and Engels is probably the most fruitful known in history. So close was it that the actual authorship of works now attributed to one or the other may never be finally determined; and it will probably become one of the speculative "ifs" of history as to what separate goals their individual courses might have led them had they not run as a team.

Throughout Mayer's book on Engels there is what seems to me too great a stress on Engels' sacrifices. Engels, it is true, took from his own scanty spare time to help Marx by doing some of his correspondence for him to the New York Tribune, one of the few paid assignments Marx ever got. Engels further made the still greater sacrifice of remaining in business when he might have retired to carry out projected scientific works of his own, in order to support Marx. Nevertheless it seems to me that Engels' fulfillment of his personal destiny was best achieved in this remarkable though often self-sacrificing collaboration with Marx; and there are explicit statements giving this as his own opinion. It must also be remembered that the sacrifices Engels made were, after all, not made for Marx personally, but for the revolutionary movement; it was for the production of Das Kapital that Engels' aid was given. It should also be stressed that Marx sacrificed himself equally. He used up his own inheritance on maintaining revolutionary journals; he rejected opportunities for comfort; he took a course which meant a life of overwork for himself, by which he weakened and finally wrecked a powerful physique, and of hardship for his family to whom he was deeply attached. He endured poverty, exile, homelessness, he had to see his beloved wife wear herself into illness, and some of his children die. Certainly there was enough sacrifice in such devotion to a cause; not to speak of the strain it was upon a sensitive, independent man to make continuous call upon another's bounty.

Engels was a modest man. He referred to Marx as a "genius," and spoke of the futility of comparing oneself with a genius. More than once, speaking of their joint efforts, he allotted himself a subordinate place. Mayer attempts, in a way, to rescue Engels from the shadow of his own modesty; and every biographer of Engels would have that function to perform. This part of his task Mayer does well enough, but his book as a whole is no large achievement. It is a valuable book only by default; that is, there happens to be no other biography of Engels available in English. The best section is the early part where Mayer deals with Engels' youth, a subject he had covered in a much larger work as yet untranslated.

As it stands the book is too short for its subject. A biography of a figure like Engels whose life was devoted to the development of revolutionary ideas, and the crises of which were determined by the fate of these ideas in the world of action, must be a steady tracing and analysis of these ideas in their continuous development. For this, it seems to me, Mayer is not equipped; his presentation of Marxism, both as an ideology and as a program of action, is colorless and imprecise; he does not feel its immediacy; his convictions seem tepid; there is a consequent lack of passion in the book which the writer, on occasion, seems himself to be conscious of and to try to make up for by oratorical passages. It is interesting to note that one leaves the book more impressed by the virtues of Engels as a man, his modesty, gayety, generosity and courage, than with his achievements as a thinker and as a revolutionist, toward the vindication of which Mayer set himself.

The clue lies perhaps in the fact that Mayer is a Social-Democrat and that to some extent he presents a Social-Democratic Engels, doing in Engels' biography what the official Social-Democratic press did—before the present crisis—in editing Engels' works, omitting the rigorously revolutionary passages. The revisionist Bernstein is well spoken of in the book and the relations between him and Engels and Marx are represented as almost consistently cordial. There are few mentions of dissent and dissatisfaction; it is given only in one or two passages, as when Engels, noting Bernstein's friendliness with the Fabians, "grumbled," as Mayer puts it, at his "silly Fabianitis." Finally his attitude makes possible an incredible valedictory paragraph:

"He (Engels) had not wished for a world war. But he had prophesied that if it came, a flood of nationalism might swamp Europe, and the victory of socialism might be delayed for some decades. If he could live again today, he would believe that we are now passing through that period. Yet he would hold fast, as he always did, to the conviction that it was only a postponement, not a cessation, of the march of world history, which in the end must lead to the attainment of the classless society and the complete development of human nature."

Not a word there, mentioning the Soviet Union which, for that matter, is ignored completely in the book.

Mehring's "Karl Marx" is a work on an altogether higher plane. A scholar impassioned by his subject, a writer of superb skill, a man of wide culture, Mehring had the range that could comprehend Marx. The book deserves its rank as a Marxist classic. Marxism was so vital a reality for Mehring that he reacted sternly against its degeneration under official Social-Democracy, and in his old age became one of the founders and leaders of the Spartacist movement, which developed into Communism.

Mehring does what Mayer failed in doing. He gives us Marx's life in terms of the development of his ideas. The purely "biographical" sections of the book, biographical, that is, from the standpoint of Marx's private life, are scanty. Marx, of course, had very little private life in the ordinary sense; few public figures have. Whatever he did, whether it was his prolonged studies in the British Museum, or his correspondence for The New York Tribune, was an act, in interests and with objectives beyond himself. Mehring writes like a participant about the course of these ideas, a course which determined the architecture of Marx's life. And we get out of it a full and deep sense of Marx's personality.

There is nowhere anything cramped and conspiratorial in Mehring's attitude as a revolutionary. Throughout his work one feels a generous and heady temperament,

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a generosity which, however, led him into errors. At the time when Mehring was writing his book, the archives at Berlin and Petrograd had not yet been fully explored. Materials indispensable to an understanding of the relations and controversies between the two friends and Lassalle and the Lassalleans, and Bakunin and the Bakuninists, have come to light since Mehring's death. Mehring believed that Marx was motivated in the former by an enigmatic personal dislike of Lassalle, and in the latter by overhasty partisanship and therefore by too great a willingness to accept damaging gossip about Bakunin. History, he holds, justifies Marx and Engels on ideological grounds, though it does not wholly justify their bitterness during the controversy. Here, apparently, Mehring, surveying the defeated on the stage of history, allows his generosity to oversway him. Disproportionate space and emphasis are given to vindications of Lassalle's and Bakunin's sincerity and to deprecations of Marx' and Engels' suspiciousness. Time, however, has uncovered documents which completely justify the suspicions. They show, on the one hand, Lassalle's relations with Bismarck, indicating his dangerous manoeuver of turning Socialism over to the state, an early instance of class collaboration; and, on the other hand, a recantation to the Czar by Bakunin which demonstrated dangerous opportunism, to say the least. Furthermore, anarchism like reformism has fulfilled Marx' and Engels' anxious anticipations. It has produced numbers of counter-revolutionaries. Mehring's chivalrous disposition toward the opponents of Marx and Engels does credit to Mehring's good will. It has since been proved that the good will he was so convinced of in the activities of Bakunin and Lassalle was not unimpeachable, and that their opponents, judging from the import of action, reached correct conclusions. In this volume, as presented in English, there is an appendix in which there is the necessary counterweight of documentation.

But more is needed, it is to be hoped that there will some day be published an edition of this fine book containing a critical introduction supplying the lack. Mehring died in January, 1919. His work may be considered a consummation of the Marxist scholarship of his time which was based mainly on the traditions and experiences of West European Social-Democracy. In our day these traditions and experiences have met their historic test. Socialism itself has had almost a generation since then at a new level, the level of Socialist construction. In this new relationship the theories of Marx and Engels and their lifelong activities in the world revolution have acquired new meanings which it was impossible for a man of Mehring's generation to conceive. Furthermore, the documents released to Marxist scholarship and the labors of nearly twenty years of that scholarship, have added vast new stores of information, in the light of which Mehring's interpretation, at a number of points, requires alteration. Valuable, therefore, as this great book of Mehring's is, its full usefulness will not be realized until it is possible to bring out an edition supplied with the critical introduction indicated.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

"I Would Speak to the Hard-Working People"

OSCAR WILDE DISCOVERS AMERICA, 1882, by Lloyd Lewis and Henry Justin Smith. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $4.50.

THIS book, choppy and none too well written, nevertheless contains a good deal of interesting material, and the authors are not without clues to its significance. Oscar Wilde's visit to America in 1882 occurred at a time when the frontier had yielded to hustling exploitation, when the economy of bourgeois industrialism had reached such a condition of surplus that the members of that class could afford to indulge themselves in the luxury of "cultural" aspirations. On the other hand, their own intrinsic culture, Philistinism, had such hold on them that the advertised prospect of a bohemian state of things seemed at once fascinating, awful and shameless. In this situation, the appearance of Wilde was a veritable godsend; it permitted them, so to speak, to eat their cake and have it, too. The more "refined" element—i.e. the women and some of the college-bred men—could enthuse over the lectures blessed by their personal attendance, while at the same time the press could be counted on to maintain the proper ecclesiastical note of damnation and ridicule. In this way the ambivalent feelings of the upper class toward "art" found outlet sufficiently hysterical whichever way it was taken.

Lewis and Smith suggest that Wilde's presence on the American scene was a publicity device on the part of the London producer and stage manager, D'Oyly Carte, whose American company was booked to play the Gilbert and Sullivan opera *Patience* during the winter of 1881-82. Wilde seems to have lent himself to this kind of exploitation more by reason of his missionary innocence than by any false charlatanry in his make-up. The account makes fairly clear that on the whole he was an earnest and sincere youngster, who behaved quite decently, indulged in a minimum of pose and maintained himself with dignified composure in spite of the rigors of an exhausting schedule and demonstrations of organized rudeness. He had both guts and sense. What the newspapers said about him was another matter, but many reporters, especially those who sought personal interviews, although they came to scoff, remained to sympathize. Wilde had a second-rate intellect and a second-rate talent for writing, but his impulses were sensitive and generous. He knew enough, for instance, to put Whitman first on the list of American writers to whom he should pay his respects, and Whitman was glad to have him call and liked him. If he occasionally got the cart before the horse—"There never was an age that needed the ministrations of art more than this cold, avaricious, selfish age. . . . Art if rightly used will pave the way for a sort of universal brotherhood of man"—that is still not so different from what some Marxians mean when they say, art is a weapon. He had a proper feeling for the mass base of art:

> If life is noble and beautiful, art will be noble and beautiful. The great eras in the history of the arts are not eras of increased artistic feeling, but, primarily, of increased technical feeling—a feeling which must originate with the workman . . . I would speak to the hard-working people, whom I wish I could reach through the prejudice that shuts them and me away from each other . . . It is to the mechanics and workers of your country that I look for the triumph that must come.

He recognized how commercialism exercised a vitiating influence:

> I have nothing to do with commerce and what is called progress. . . . I see in that rush and crash of business the native and characteristic picturesqueness of people is being rapidly destroyed. . . . In America I have found it only in the Indians and the Negro, and I am surprised that painters and poets have paid so little attention to them as a subject of art. . . . The moment art becomes a luxury it loses. . . . Luxury gives us the gaudy, the vulgar, the transient. It may help, but it never creates art.

On the lecture platform Wilde seems to have displayed a few pansy mannerisms, which the press played up for all they were worth and then some, but the matter of his message was disappointing in its sobriety and lack of sensationalism. When he got right down among the rank and file, what the papers said made little difference. Wilde felt at home with cowboys and miners; he could play his cards and hold his liquor with the next man, and he found himself in much better company when he was with regular

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guys than when he was stuck with the stuffed shirts and phony big shots of the metropolitan drawing rooms. Personal ridicule, he thought, could not touch him; if he had anything, it could stand on its own merit.

Lewis and Smith have supported their account of his adventures with copious documentation and illustration of the various gaudy, vulgar and transient performances that were going on at the time. The bourgeois taste of our day looks back on these with a patronizing smile of amusement, so obviously coarse and crude do such antics seem. The dreadful thing about them, and this is what our sophisticated citizen cannot recognize, is their essential persistence; the fundamental likes of this society have not been changed, they have only disguised themselves in the slick and nasty niceness of glossy paper and silver screen, in the glib and unctuous voices of the air. What is required for their treatment is more than men of good will like Oscar Wilde, and more than belief in their susceptibility of conversion to nobler use: what is needed is their liquidation and that takes what John Reed referred to in a euphemistic moment, as "the profound social change." JOHN YOST.

Debutante Revolution

IT WON'T BE FLOWERS, by Judith Kelly. Harper & Bros. $2.

MISS KELLY has given us a sensitive picture of the intellectual plight of those upper-class young women whose well-dressed existences have become barren before the intruding barbarities of poverty and war. Charming Bridget Smith has a beautiful home and loves her handsome husband, but with all this she is restless and feels insecure because, being intelligent and perceptive, she is disturbed by ragged men on the park benches and war headlines in the morning paper. She is afraid of impending violence because of what they may do to her husband and her home: war "for what? For her clothes, her cared-for loveliness, this silver room? Dan die for these meaningless nothings, this false safety and dollar beauty?" But her unrest is mere confusion until she meets Mark Enters, who, the author would have us believe, provided her with a Marxist sword with which to cut through the intellectual underbrush.

Mark Enters is described on the jacket as a "brilliant, impatient young Communist," and the author speaks approvingly of his "crackling, concise talk" and "swift, incisive mind and intuition"; but for one who presumably has a revolutionary function in life our hero seems to this reviewer one of the most repulsive parlor Bolsheviks of all fiction. He sits in Bridget's beautiful silver living-room and, making sure everyone is listening, delivers his opinions of medical school in what the author calls a "brilliant, decisive, hard-bitten performance," to wit: "Nine-tenths of the staff were fools with phonographs for brains and whipped cream for guts. . . . Go through a private ward and then through a public; see how you like the contrast." Then, like a little boy trying to startle his elders, he looks at Bridget "to see what dent his words might have made on her composure."

To show his emancipation from this bourgeois world, our "revolutionary" exhibitionist is careful to be rude to its bourgeois inhabitants (this the author thinks rather endearing) and sneer at their non-revolutionary remarks. His attentions were concentrated upon Bridget, specifically, upon getting her into bed with him. When he fails in this, he refuses to answer her question, "What shall I do?" It is not apparent why the "indestructible selflessness" that Bridget begins painfully to achieve on the last page should, as far as Mark has been concerned, follow in its translation into action the line of Marx any more than the line of Coughlin.

One feels that Mark has been crudely manufactured for symbolic purposes; he is unreal and unconvincing. But the Bridgets in this world, Miss Kelly has seen and known and understood, and about them she has something significant to say.

SEBASTIAN STONE.

Brief Review

LINCOLN AND THE COMMUNISTS, by Earl Browder. (Workers Library Publishers, Inc. 2 cents.) I won't advise professional Republicans to read this pamphlet. They might begin to feel uneasy about using Lincoln's name from their political pulpit. Why, the man was a Red! First, he refused to be dominated by the Supreme Court on the question of Negro slavery. That's a good start for any Red. When the reaction took arms, he stood his ground. Civil war followed. Lincoln emerged victorious. Today's upheaval finds the party founded by Lincoln in the enemy camp of reaction. Meanwhile, the tory Democrats of yesterday haven't changed their tory spots. With the Supreme Court invalidating the N.R.A. and A.A.A., proclaiming social legislation unconstitutional, Roosevelt is silent. Worse, he smiles. Earl Browder's parallel between the two historic moments is complete. "The times again call for a Lincoln, for a new party, for a new program." The immediate answer to reaction is a Farmer-Labor Party. This pamphlet should be read widely during this election year.

THE HANDBOOK OF THE SOVIET UNION, compiled by American-Russian Chamber of Commerce. The John Day Company. $3. An invaluable reference book well arranged and clearly written. The sections include: an analysis of the Soviet government and its judicial procedure, a description of its foreign relations with particular reference to trade treaties, the economic geography of the Soviet Union, a history of its economic development since the Revolution, the working out of the Second Five-Year Plan, the organization of Soviet industry, of Agriculture, of Transportation and Communications, Municipal Construction, Foreign Trade, American-Soviet Trade Relations, International Trade, Finance, Labor Conditions and Social Welfare, Educational and Cultural Development, Regulations for Foreigners, Tourist Travel in the Soviet Union. The volume concludes with a series of valuable statistical surveys, maps and charts.

SIGN OF THE HEMLOCK, by Walter Ludwig. Pioneer Youth of America, 219 West 29th St., New York, N. Y. 10c. Good reading for youngsters twelve years or older. It is a story of the Shays rebellion with the family of Daniel Shays as the principal characters. Sound historically and fascinating as a story.

The Best Poems of 1935. Selected by Thomas Moult. Harcourt, Brace & Co. $2. The success of Thomas Moult's annual is, as he says, evidence that an interest in poetry survives. Unfortunately, it is too much of the "led" sort. Poetry readers still seem to be afraid of their own taste, hesitate to buy new volumes of the poets while they buy anthologies. Moult's taste is good enough for ordinary purposes; but in these years it does not serve. Ignoring proletarian poetry except for one poem by C. Day Lewis, he inevitably invalidates his title, since he thereby leaves out many of the best poems of the year. J. S.

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Music

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THE NEW Toscanini records of Wagnerian excerpts have the authentic ring of a concert performance. Victor has been wise in acceding to the maestro's most minute instructions, for the discs have a fidelity to tone, balance and dynamics that the radio broadcasts were never able to approach. The full Philharmonic was used, instead of the sixty-odd men usually employed in symphonic recordings, and the engineers were forbidden to tinker with the controls or alter in any way the leader's own dynamic scheme. Carnegie Hall has proved itself almost as ideal a recording studio as it is a concert auditorium, since these records possess a clarity and definition that Stokowski has never surpassed in all his experiments.

Included in this volume are the preludes to acts one and three of *Lohengrin,* Toscanini's own concert arrangement of the Dawn and Siegfried's Rhine Journey from *Gotterdammerung,* and the *Siegfried* Idyll. It is doubtful whether Wagner ever received more exalted performances; all that is cheap and pretentious in the music is forgotten in the light of the conductor's supreme taste and his ability to extract from the Philharmonic playing that is not of this world. No one else could have secured such string tone as one hears in the Gotterdammerung extracts, or such brass attack as in the prelude to act three of *Lohengrin.* It is only in the woodwinds that any faults can be found.

Mechanically, only two flaws could be found in the whole album (M-308): a delay of forty seconds in starting on the second side, and an inexcusable clarinet fluff by Bellison on the second side of the *Gotterdammerung.*

With the approach of summer the companies are once again indulging in their annoying formula of specializing in the lighter classics. Instead of Bach, Columbia gives us Elgar 'cello concertos, abridged versions of *Louise* and a mediocrely sung volume of Robert Franz' *lieder,* while Victor comes through with the first Mendelssohn *Quartet in E Flat Major,* a beautiful work played by the Budapest String Quartet, and a Dvorak symphony by the Czech Philharmonic.

Buried away in the little known lists of Perfect-Melotone are examples of the finest Negro ensemble singing of spirituals I have yet heard on records. The artists are Mitchell's Christian Singers, four workers from the southeastern extremity of South Carolina without formal musical training of any kind, whose rhythmic freedom and perfect ensemble sense are a refreshing contrast to the stilted and studied singing of the more "dicty" groups from the Southern universities and churches. They sing without accompaniment or written arrangement, but they have a unity of feeling which one can only find in the greatest of improvising musicians. Whatever the sociological implications of spirituals may be they are undeniably authentic folk material when they are sung in the original. Mitchell's group not only brings out all the warmth and depth of the songs; they establish themselves as interpreters almost without equal in the music world.

The particular record which occasions this ecstatic outburst is the coupling of *Who Was John* and *What More Can Jesus Do* (Perfect-Melotone 60758). Inasmuch as they are in the "race" catalog they must be specially ordered from dealers (any store carrying Brunswick, Columbia, or Vocalion records can supply them). The recording itself is perfection, with admirable balance and blending of the voices, and there are many more sides, some of spirituals unknown even to collectors, still to be released by the company.

Although it has been buffeted around by grasping commercial managers and libelled by flagrant imitators, swing music continues to be released on the phonograph. Benny Goodman, whose music last year was anathema to the Broadway music world, has found himself to be among the most popular and successful orchestra leaders in the country, and in his wake follows the magnificent Negro orchestra of Fletcher Henderson, which was always the finest and least inhibited in the country. The excellence of Henderson's arrangements for Goodman were bound to redound to the credit of his own band, and now one can at last hear the phenomenon of a colored and a white band sounding almost the same—which is intended to be a great compliment for Goodman.

Goodman has made many excellent Victor records during the past six weeks, the most exciting of which are *Stardust, I Know That You Know,* and the soon-to-be-released *St. Louis Blues,* all of them Henderson arrangements. But he may best be heard in his new ensemble records with Teddy Wilson at the piano and Gene Krupa on drums: *China's Boy, Nobody's Sweetheart, Lady Be Good* and *More Than You Know,* which are altogether without parallel in the jazz world today.

Teddy Wilson, using half of Fletcher Henderson's band, has just recorded four excellent sides for Brunswick, two of which, *Mary Had a Little Lamb* and *Too Good to be True,* are now on the market. The records were made late at night, a time when Negro musicians feel more like playing than in the abnormal early morning hours when most records are made. There is a freedom here which can only come from eight musicians playing from the sheer enjoyment of it.

There have been several other good dance releases of which we might mention Bunny Berigan's *I Can't Get Started* (Vocalion), Fletcher Henderson's *Stealin' Apples, Christopher Columbus, Blue Lou* (Vocalion) and his *Moonrise on the Lowlands* and *I'll Always Be in Love with You* (Victor); *Mary* Lou Williams' piano solo of *Overhand* (Decca) and Alphonse Trent's old Gennett record of *I Found a New Baby,* now repressed on Champion.

HENRY JOHNSON.

Current Theater

Battle Hymn (Experimental Theater). Michael Gold's and Michael Blankfort's play about John Brown, dramatized in three earnest acts and immediately related to the America of 1936 by prologs and an epilog in an "expressionist" mode. Not the drama of grand poetry and passion which the John Brown theme invites, but a picture of the heroic battler against slavery as observed from the outside—a pageant of struggle more than a drama of conflict. Written with warmth and color.

Bury the Dead (Barrymore Theater). Irwin Shaw's remarkable anti-war play sensitively staged and acted; written with poetry and passion. Required attendance.

1936 (Biltmore Theater). The third edition of the W.P.A.'s Living Newspaper project (the first, *Ethiopia,* was censored). Less interesting as entertainment and thinking than *Triple-A Plowed Under* because it lacks a binding idea. But as a review of what happened last year, it presents some significant events with startling effectiveness—particularly the Angelo Herndon case, and the rise and fall of Huey Long.

Dance of Death (Adelphi Theater). W. H. Auden's poetic travesty on the bourgeoisie. The most artistically ambitious of the W.P.A. undertakings, and a brilliant idea, but the script falls far short of its possibilities. The producer has done a heroic job; the music of Clair Leonard is a rare delight.

Class of '29 (Manhattan Theater). A play about college graduates of the class of 1929 who find themselves surplus material in the profit-system world—a theme which has been crying for a playwright. Orrie Lashin and Milo Hastings have approached it with earnestness and understanding, but with less than the required dramatic skill and resourcefulness. The dialog is often wooden, the characters for the most part lack impact though a few passages register sharply. Chiefly significant for its theme, *Class of '29* might well be visited by the seniors in the metropolitan colleges—and the juniors, sophomores and freshmen as well.

The Drift (The Community Players). This new play by Claire and Paul Sifton, produced May 28, 29, 30 at 550 West 110th Street, deserves serious consideration by one of the social theaters. The struggles of miners in the Mesabe iron range of northern Minnesota are dramatized in two acts packed with material. The revisions derived through professional rehearsal and production could make *Drift* one of the best plays of its kind.

S. B.

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If You Want Immortality

ROBERT FORSYTHE

IF the controversy over Art and Propaganda could be confined to the spring months, I think it could be cleared up. This is particularly true in the theater, where plays are divided into two groups: Propaganda, i.e., plays about/with ideas, and Art, i.e., plays based on the eternal verities of love, courage, hate, greed, home and mother.

The common assumption is that plays based on current ideas age quickly and disappear, whereas plays based on the fundamental emotions—love, courage, hate, greed, home and mother—are eternal. The spring revivals always disprove that theory. When the Players Club decides on its spring show, the odds are ten to one that it will be *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or something by Sheridan or Congreve or, as happens this year, a satire on politics by George Ade known as *The County Chairman.*

Even at the height of his fame, critics were anxious to point out that though Bernard Shaw's plays might be clever they could scarcely be expected to live. I can't tell you what plays of the same period were supposed to outlast Shaw because they have been dead so long I can't remember them. I can tell you, however, that they were plays about which the critics said: "Thank God, here is drama about things of the spirit and none of your sophomoric propaganda." The spirit and the soul are important ingredients of art and critics are always thanking God for them and time is always burying them as fast as they are born.

Nothing so revealed the ineptness of the critics as their protests against the epilog of Shaw's *Saint Joan.* With their minds fixed on soul and spirit it was never possible to beat the simple fact into their heads that Shaw had not written a romantic story of the Maid of Orleans but had produced an astonishing drama of ideas through which Joan moved as a symbol. The human story is there but what distinguishes Shaw's treatment from Schiller's or Andrew Lang's is the scene in Warwick's tent when the political history of the period is discussed with a lucidity which for the first time makes her life something other than an accidental happening or the miracle which the Church, belatedly, saw in it. The famous trial scene is distinguished not so much by the torture of the Maid as by the light it throws upon the Inquisition. The poignancy of Joan's fate is not lessened but the cement which holds the scene together and lifts it to the height of genius is supplied by the Inquisitor. Shaw transformed the story of Joan of Arc into a problem play and produced a masterpiece. The romantic versions of the old tale are dead and new ones of the same type will crop up and wither with equal promptness. Shaw's *Saint Joan* will live and you may bank on it.

Still filled with their notions of great fundamental and eternal things, the critics were outraged that Shaw should not end *Saint Joan* with the burning. Instead he insisted upon an epilog which set forth what the Maid meant to her time, what effect she had upon the contemporaries who outlived her and upon history which was bent upon rearranging her reputation. Nothing is more pathetic than the little gentlemen who talk about the "sense of the theater," meaning the tricks of the theater and the subservience of all theater people to the importance of the stage. Dramatists who think too much of the theater are great cowards. Even when they have hold of a fine idea, you can see their fear that the audience will grow weary of them if they press it. If Shaw had something to say, he stood still and said it, if it took an hour and threatened to drive the audience into the night. They never went into the night because audiences never leave when they are caught by something important. What drives them frantic is the old eternal nonsense, tricked up no matter how gaudily in new fittings. *Saint Joan* runs three hours and a half and people do not leave before the end because people are not fools.

The esthetic critics have spoken overhastily about Shaw, as they have about every other man of ideas. The truth happens to be that, with one great exception, the *only* plays which stand a chance of survival are plays of ideas, satires, comedies of manners, problem plays. The fine high concepts of spirit and soul—fate, deep and elementary emotions, kinship with God—have an annoying habit of decaying.

The great exception, of course, is Shakespeare and here, but for a practical consideration, my thesis falls down. The practical consideration is that the mould seems to have been broken after the Bard of Avon was created. Granted everything that may be said about him, he seems to have no successor. I can admit that a parade of Shakespeares would be perfect, but the sad fact is that in four hundred years there has not been another. When there are plays to be revived, we turn to Molière, the satirist, or to Sheridan and Congreve, social ironists. Or we turn to Hauptmann of *The Weavers,* or to Ibsen, who has been read out of the party repeatedly by nervous critics who don't like the thought that the old Dane's plays, thematic as they are, persist in living. The new tactic is to say that although Ibsen's ideas have rusted, he will live because of his intensity of emotion. In other words, if a problem play lives it does so despite its ideas. If it dies at an early age, it is because it is based on ideas rather than on the eternal verities. These people invariably have you.

The only American play which has shown signs of eternal life is *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* a blatantly propagandistic melodrama. The thing makes no sense. Where are all the tragic and fateful dramas which William Winter felt were everlasting? Where are the deep and abiding masterpieces which had so much more validity than Shaw's trivial and journalistic exercises? The Theater Guild has been threatening a revival of Somerset Maugham's *The Letter* for next season. If they want a season of revivals which will not only do them credit but make them a great deal of money, they can find it in G. Bernard Shaw, who never created profoundly emotional characters, who seemed not at all affected by the fact that Prometheus was once bound to a rock, and who substituted brains for mysticism. Where is there a more perfect comedy than *Arms and the Man,* a satire on the bellicose spirit; and how about *Androcles and the Lion, The Doctor's Dilemma, Caesar and Cleopatra, Man and Superman, Saint Joan, Heartbreak House, Candida, Pygmalion, The Man of Destiny, The Devil's Disciple, You Never Can Tell?*

It will take a deal of showing to convince me that the deep and transcendental and elemental plays of Synge or Lady Gregory will outlive Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* or *Plough and the Stars,* which are by way of being revolutionary and are surely rationalistic rather than poetic and mystical dramas. Would someone like to join me in living a hundred years longer so that we might compare the fate of Shaw's *Saint Joan* and Eugene O'Neill's imitation Greek dramas, *Strange Interlude* and *Mourning Becomes Electra?*

On Broadway lately were Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* and Ibsen's *Ghosts.* What *Cyrano* was originally I don't know but as Walter Hampden played it, it was a burlesque of romance in the tradition of Don Quixote. Nobody in his senses could be moved by a script which sounds like the libretto of a comic opera. There is some attempt at genuine emotion in the last act but it is too late. *Cyrano* is dying, the play is dead and will probably stay dead now that Hampden has ended with it. *Ghosts,* on the contrary, is not going to die with Nazimova.

When, therefore, the young dramatist lis-

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tens intently to Maxwell Anderson, who progresses from *Gods of the Lightning,* a direct and fervent treatment of the Sacco-Vanzetti case, to *Winterset,* a poetic and muddled and essentially distorted version of the same tragedy, I should like to warn him that, quite contrary to belief in some quarters, Mr. Anderson is not necessarily on the side of the gods. I should think excellent advice for a young playwright would be: Keep away from those Greeks and the fate stuff if you want immortality. If you want the brief acclaim of critics who are always taken in by a new Aeschylus, it will be easy enough for you to write in the dark style. What you will find difficult are the O'Casey and Shaw styles but even if you lack their brilliance and cling only to the substance of their art, that what is immediately important more often turns out to be permanently important, you will be far ahead of the amateur Greeks and Shakespeares. In short, have no fear of the cry of propaganda, but have a great repugnance for weak propaganda.

Current Films

The Plough That Broke the Plains (Resettlement Administration—Rialto): This is the much talked about documentary film that was made by Ralph Steiner, Paul Strand and Leo Hurwitz. It has its faults, but the photography is beautiful and the musical score, by Virgil Thompson, a real contribution to film music. The first important documentary film to be made in the United States and it must be seen. Will be discussed at length in a future issue.

Bullets or Ballots (Warner Bros.—Strand): Now that they have finished with the G-Men cycle, the crusading Warner Brothers are making a desperate attempt to glorify the city police. The film tells us that there are big bad men behind crime. Who are they? BANKERS! Oh, but not all bankers; only *three mean big shots in New York. All the police* have to do is to get these three and the crime wave is stopped. Edward G. Robinson, ex-public enemy, is now the detective-hero and he doesn't get a chance to do anything except to look menacing. The film is so full of demagogy that it doesn't have a chance to get dramatic. Martin Mooney, Hearst crime reporter, tells just enough to make the film superficial as a social document. The best part of the film is the illustration of the mechanics of the numbers racket.

It's Love Again (Gaumont-British—Roxy): An English musical film in the lethargic manner. Jessie Matthews is a female Fred Astaire. It is moderately tuneful but undistinguished; but there is some good dancing.

Three Wise Guys (M.G.M.): In which three shake-down men get sentimental over a baby.

Private Number (20th Century): A good cast wasted on a stupid cinderella yarn.

Sons o' Guns (Warner Bros-Strand): An ancient war comedy that smacks of *The Big Parade* and *Shoulder Arms* starring Joe E. Brown, who is wasted.

Fury (M.G.M.-Capitol): This is without a doubt the most important social film that has ever come out of Hollywood. Obviously based on the San Jose lynching it is a powerful indictment against this American version of legal murder. It is Fritz Lang's first American film (he will be remembered for *M*). As a melodrama and a social document it makes *I Am a Fugitive from the Chain Gang* a pale thriller. Norma Krasna, who wrote the story, and Lang deserve our heartiest congratulations. To be fully reviewed in the next issue. PETER ELLIS.

Between Ourselves

NEXT week's issue will contain a number of special features, among them: the second installment of John L. Spivak's investigation of the Black Legion; Joshua Kunitz's opening article in his new Soviet series (see back cover); and the final instalment of Ilya Ehrenbourg's four articles on "Spain in Revolt."

A party for the benefit of THE NEW MASSES will be held on the evening of June 12 in apartment 5C at 15 West 8th Street, New York. Admission 40 cents. Refreshments, dancing, entertainment.

Joseph Brodsky, recently returned from Brazil, will speak on "The People's Front in Brazil" at the June 10 meeting of the Friends of THE NEW MASSES. The meeting will be held in Steinway Hall, 113 West 57th Street, New York, at 8:30 p.m., Studio 717A. Everyone interested in the Friends of THE NEW MASSES is invited.

Among the contributors to this issue: A. B. Magil, who has frequently appeared in our pages, is on the staff of The Daily Worker; Jacques Maréchal, French journalist and contributor to *Regards,* a People's Front publication, is touring the United States; William F. Dunne occasionally writes on labor and politics for THE NEW MASSES; Arnold Reid has lived and traveled extensively in Latin-American countries.

Joseph Freeman's eye-witness account of the Socialist Party convention was wired sheet by sheet from Cleveland's Public Auditorium to our printer in New York. In the haste of setting up copy under these circumstances, the following typographical errors crept into the published story. Oneal spoke in the typical "Hearst-Forward" (not "Hearst-Howard") manner. In 1901 Algernon Lee edited "The Comrade, a New York magazine" (not "The New York Magazine"). And "no clear answers were given on the united front *or* Farmer-Labor Party" (not "united *front* Farmer Labor Party)."

Isidor Schneider in his article last week suggested that the publication of Caroline Slade's *Sterile Sun* was timed to take advantage of the publicity of the Luciano trial. The publishers advise us that the contract for the book was signed over a year ago and the publication was deferred to allow Miss Slade opportunities for revisions. The book was prepared for the press long before the case broke in the news.

"Borah's Ledger," by Betty Millard, which appeared in the issue of May 26, was offered by way of review of Claudius O. Johnson's book, *Borah of Idaho,* published by Longmans, Green & Co. $3.

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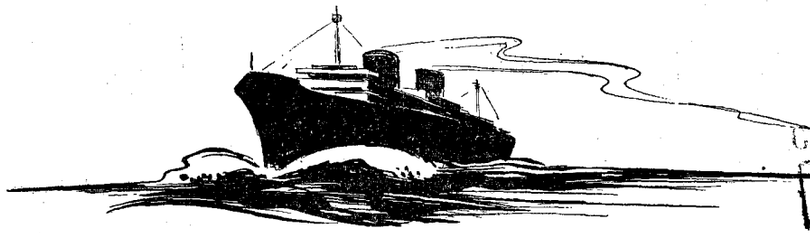

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